

Austin Autograph.

VOLUME XXV

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NUMBER 5

It Was A Lively Newspaper For A Lively Town

You hold in your hands Volume 25, Number 5, of the Austin Autograph, published 77 years after Volume 25, Number 4, which went to press on Sept. 28, 1911, two days before the flood. This special edition includes articles from both early 1887 issues of the Autograph and pieces from 1911, the last year of publication. It is intended to give you a sense of what the Autograph and other turn-of-the-century papers were like, and is not intended to be an exact facsimile of any one paper. It also includes stories from other early local newspapers, re-creations, and historical features. We hope this unique souvenir edition takes you back to the "good old days," and gives you an inkling of what it was really like "way back when" in Austin and the rest of Potter County.

Established in 1887 by Arthur J. Hughes, the Austin Autograph joined a lively collection of community newspapers that came and went around the turn of the century, keeping the citizens of Potter County more or less informed about both local and world events.

In the Potter County Journal's May 25, 1904 Centennial Edition, a history of county newspapers reports that at one time or another, between 1839 and 1904, there were papers in Mina, Shinglehouse, Cross Fork, Harrison, Ulysses, Genesee and Oswayo, as well as Austin, Galeton and Coudersport.

Both the Potter Enterprise (the only present-day survivor, as the Potter Leader-Enterprise, of all those publications) and the Potter County Journal were being published in Coudersport at the time Hughes started his paper in Austin.

The Austin Autograph was distinctive from the very outset, a four-page paper, but with huge pages, 27 1/2 inches long by 21 1/4 inches wide. (While this special edition has been reduced to modern newspaper size, with an eight-column format in place of the nine columns used in the Autograph, we have attempted to recreate the look of the paper to give readers an idea of what the Autograph was like.)

Evidently the large size caused the Autograph's publisher, Hughes, some problems, because in 1888 the paper switched to a smaller eight-column layout, and in 1890, became a regular-sized six-column paper, a format it maintained until the 1911 flood stopped its presses for good.

Democratic Paper
According to the 1904 Journal article, "the politics of the paper has always been Democratic."

Unlike today's papers, which by and large try to maintain an objective distance, newspapers in those times were rabidly political, backing candidates with all the power of the press and attacking opponents with a will, and sometimes with less than the truth.

Both the Journal and the Enterprise were also Democratic in 1887, although the Enterprise would turn Republican in 1890.

The Democratic Autograph stood unopposed politically until 1898 when the Austin Republican was established by William H. Sullivan who had been owner of the Autograph from 1888-1890 (with a brief interlude in 1889 when Sullivan sold it and then bought it back).

From 1898 to 1904, it had eight editors, and the Journal article reports that during that time the paper was solidly Republican, except in 1903 when it was Socialist Socialist!

That Austin could support two newspapers is just another indication of the prosperity the town enjoyed in those days, thanks to the timber covering the steep hills for miles in every direction.

The first issue of the Autograph is dated Sept. 16, 1887. H.D. Caskey is listed as the editor, and publication day is "every Friday."

The front page features a left hand column filled with short news items, a practice coming back into favor with many of today's newspapers.

Among the items printed in that column Sept. 16 is this curious entry:

"Self-defense is one of the deadliest maladies now prevailing in Kentucky. Not long ago, Ed Cooley, living near Lancaster, while suffering from the disease, killed George Scott with an axe."

He had another attack the other night when two brothers named Green, being inspired by liquor fired their pistols at him. Cooley coolly returned the little attack with shot-gun and revolver. One Green was killed and the other fatally wounded. Mr. Cooley is just now convalescent, but a relapse into self-defense may attack him at any time."

'Mrs. Dr. Ellis'
Another brief entry in this column is much too brief. "Mrs. Dr. Ellis, an American lady, is physician to the Queen of Corea (Korea). She has apartments in the palace at Seoul and receives an annual salary of \$10,000."

On how the reader wishes for more information! Just how did this Mrs. Dr. Ellis (an interesting title) get to Ellis (an interesting title) place a "Corea" Was it the only place a woman doctor could find a job in those

days? Certainly if she was an oddity in the U.S. she would have been even more of a curiosity in the oriental court. Perhaps it was the handsome salary, an amount that meant much more in 1887 than it does today.

Little tidbits like this story are what make browsing in old newspapers like the Autograph so fascinating. In putting together this special edition, we have included many such articles and excerpts, some from the Autograph and some from other early newspapers.

The rest of the front page of the Sept. 16 edition of the Autograph is taken up with national and international news, under the heading, "The News Condensed."

* There are no big headlines, and the stories run from column to column, with divider lines between columns, a practice followed by almost all newspapers of that period.

There are news briefs from Washington, D.C., including a report that General Crook has advised the War Department that "all unauthorized persons had been expelled from the Uintah and Ouray reservations, and that the Utes (an Indian tribe in Wyoming) were all at home and quiet," a reminder that the Indian Wars were very recent history in 1887.

The front page had sections with news from the east, the west and south, and "foreign intelligence."

It also carried stories reprinted from city newspapers. From the New York Tribune came a story on the Kouelnoi Mammoth, a frozen specimen discovered in Russia and estimated to be over 10,000 years old.

There is a piece on the sinking of the schooner Niagara in Lake Superior, and one about the indictment of a "broad" (a robber) named McGarrie.

Local News Inside

The two inside pages of the paper are devoted mostly to local news and advertising (yes, it was as essential to newspapers then as it is now).

The back page contained a poem called "The Sower" by Antoinette Wakeman, taken from Good Housekeeping, and a rather unusual piece titled "How It Really Was," written in the form of two conversations between two couples, discussing each other. The Chancellors are discussing the Harries, whom they must invite to dinner. They agree the Harries are bores and try to think of a way to invite them and still insure they will not come. It turns out that the Harries feel the same way about the Chancellors, but can think of no way to get out of going to the dinner once they receive the invitation.

It is a witty piece, giving an interesting picture of how social life was in those days, and in many ways still is. It too is a reprint, from the New York Independent.

Other articles on the back page, mostly reprints, include a piece about an owl breeder, a story on Paris hat makers and a report on butter exporting, describing how butter could be packaged to keep for up to three years!

There was also, a sort of 1887 "Farm and Fireside," which included such advice as "Oat straw is best for filling beds and it is well to change the straw as often as once a year."

And that was the premier issue of the Austin Autograph. The paper would continue publication for 24 years, until 1911, when the dam broke and wiped out much of the downtown, including the Autograph office.

How ironic that the headline and article below should have been published in the Sept. 14, 1911, issue of the Autograph just two weeks before the dam broke.

Don't Worry About Austin

Notwithstanding that the allegation is made broadcast that Austin is down and out, paving of its Main street has just commenced. We wouldn't be surprised if another crazy luncheon tried another whack at starting the second newspaper there.—Port Allegany Reporter.

Respectfully suggested that if the writer of the above screed should confine himself to his own town, he will find work enough cut out for him.



Homes were tumbled like toy blocks by the destructive force of the flood waters.

AUSTIN'S DAY OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION — ONLY AN INSTANT'S WARNING

An Indescribable Tragedy. Dam Gives Way, and the Merciless Torrents Sweep Everything Before Them, Leaving Only Want, Misery and Hopelessness

The Austin Autograph, (1887-1911), never got to cover what would have been the biggest story in its history, the destruction of the Austin dam. If offices were in the path of the flood, its presses buried under the logs and mill debris driven through downtown Austin by the unleashed water. This special edition, issued in honor of Austin's Centennial, gives the Autograph a chance, at last, to cover the story it missed. The story is based on the account of the disaster in the Oct. 5, 1911 issue of the Potter Enterprise. All direct quotes are as they appear in that article. The headline is the one used with the Enterprise story. (It was too good to pass up.) Other articles on the flood are either re-creations from eyewitness accounts or are taken directly from other newspapers.

It has been six days since that fateful Saturday afternoon when our town fell victim to the unleashed fury of the waters of the Bayless Pulp and Paper Company dam. A dreadful stillness lies behind the harsh noise of those endeavoring to clear away the devastation, the stillness of a community destroyed.

That devastation is nearly complete. Where once stood the bustling little metropolis of Austin, now there is nothing but the shattered remains of our proud and thriving town.

Work is continuing to recover the dead with all possible speed, but it is impossible even as we go to press to give an accurate accounting of the deceased or to give absolutely correct figures for the number who lost their lives in this dreadful tragedy, though the death toll is not expected to exceed 85.

The work of taking a census was begun Sunday, but since many of the survivors have taken up temporary residence with relatives or friends in other towns, obtaining information on the whereabouts of residents is slow work.

Nine Hundred Homeless

By 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, 32 bodies had been recovered. With over 160 dwellings destroyed, 900 people are homeless. Sixty-four businesses were destroyed, five churches, four hotels, and five industries.

Current estimates put the losses at \$4,600,000. Those figures take on full meaning only when one looks out over the actual destruction. Even seeing the evidence with one's own eyes, the real extent of the devastation is hard to comprehend.

What one understands is that friends and neighbors are no more; that the mangled corpses pulled from the wreckage were once people we passed on the street or sat next to at Sunday services.

Those, like this reporter who, being away from town, did not view the tragedy, try to imagine how it must have been as people fled for their lives with only moments to escape the surging torrent of water and debris bearing down upon them.

The towering cement dam erected two years ago by Bayless was 32 feet wide at the base, and 600 feet long, rising to a height of 65 feet and spanning the valley formed by Freeman Run.

Said to be constructed according to the most modern engineering methods,

the structure has been awash in controversy almost from the planning stages. Cracks appeared less than two months after completion, and the dam had been drained for inspection. Others had noted an obvious bow in the dam where none should have been.

Though there has been much discussion these past two years, Bayless did no major repair work of any kind on the dam and most Austin residents had learned to live with the unresolved questions about the structure's soundness. However, others have left their homes at times, believing the dam was about to break.

But when their worst fears were realized, few Austin citizens had enough advance warning to do more than flee for their lives. Had there not been extra operators on duty because it was primary election day, they might have had even less warning.

Even Calls Warning

What warning there was came first via Harry Davis, a retired Buffalo & Susquehanna locomotive engineer, who was actually watching the dam when the first break appeared.

"It was a wonderful sight," said Mr. Davis. "There was nothing to indicate that the dam was about to give way and someone had just remarked about its strength when with a sharp report a hole appeared in the west end. In a moment water poured through it and it was immediately seen that the hole was getting larger. In a minute, it was twenty feet wide and extended almost the entire height of the dam. Then there was another report and it seemed as if the whole structure was giving way."

Alarmed, Mr. Davis raced for higher ground, while some of the others who had been at the dam with him were caught in the first deluge. The quick-thinking train engineer rushed to a nearby house and called Bell Central in Austin, about a mile away.

She did not have much time to telephone the alarm, but I think she did her best. I guess she is dead. I have not heard anything about her since."

Actually three women operators were on hand, Miss Kathleen Lyons, Miss Lena Binkey and Miss Hazel Knapp. First Bayless was called to sound their whistle. Unfortunately, the whistle had been sounding frequently, false alarms triggered by men working on telephone lines, so many people did not at first pay attention when it sounded again. Some thought it was a fire and hurried to the business district, thereby putting themselves into the

very path of the debris-laden cascade.

But the ladies, exhibiting more courage than their gender is ordinarily given credit for, stayed on the line, calling their neighbors, remaining on duty until the last possible moment, risking their very lives to warn others of the impending disaster.

There are no words to describe the horror those on high ground must have felt as they watched the flood roar through. Those in the path of destruction must have felt horror too, but most apparently did not suffer the horror long. Yet it was not the water that stole their lives. In fact it has been reported that some people trapped in buildings were able to hold their breath when submerged and escape unscathed as the waters receded so quickly.

But the huge mountain of debris and pulp wood swept along by the flood smashed everything in its path, including those who did not escape in time, crushing their poor bodies and snuffing out the lamp of life.

One who did escape, by the merest chance of fate, was Justice of the Peace M.N. Johnson, who was in the city building working at the election. He heard the alarm but, like others thought it a false alarm. Only when a girl went racing by outside did he step into the street to see what the trouble was.

"I did not at once turn toward the hill but walked to Main Street and Turner Avenue. There, far up toward the power plant I saw the strangest sight my eyes ever beheld. The buildings were coming toward me, riding on the top of the on-coming flood. I did not wait to see more. I ran as hard as I could to the nearest hill."

News Travels Fast

News of the disaster reached Coudersport, where this reporter was covering a meeting, and soon the roadways to Austin were crowded with vehicles loaded to capacity. This reporter transported several other newsmen to within a mile of the dam site where the vehicle had to be abandoned. Many walked the full distance.

What a dreadful sight greeted them. A town had vanished, and in its place was rubble and debris, as if a giant had set his foot upon the town and crushed it flat, or as if that giant had picked up an entire saw mill and dropped it upon the hapless town. Lumber and timber were everywhere, the remains of the mill above town, which, carried by the flood, had only made the devastation that much more complete.

All that was left were a few houses clinging to the hillsides, as if they too had run to escape the tragic consequences of Saturday's apocalypse.

To make the appalling situation worse, the flicker and glow of angry flames could be clearly seen in the waning light. Gas from broken mains was igniting and what had not been leveled by the water was now being threatened by fire.

As night drew a dark curtain over that dreadful day, the fires provided the only light aside from a few lanterns being used by those searching the debris for bodies of family and friends, still hoping against hope to find them instead, by some miracle, alive and safe.

Water mains, as well as gas mains, were broken, adding one more burden to the innumerable ones now facing the weary citizens of old town and nearby Coudersport.

Mr. Davis recalls how it looked to him.

'Awful Sight'

"I came down to Austin as soon as possible, but it was an awful sight. The water had torn through the place, taking all the principal buildings and crushing houses like egg shells. Then the fire broke out. The timbers and sides of the houses were piled up against the railroad shops and they were soon in flames. I knew there were men in the shops, how many I cannot say, but there was no way to help them. They were probably burned up. I have not seen any of them since."

"I don't know how the fire started, but it began in a score of places at once. The post office escaped, but nearby was a store, and there the flames appeared first. Then I looked for the bank of Austin, but it was gone, swept away I guess, because I did not see it burning. "But worst of all were the cries of the women and children. You see most all the men were at work, and they were at home alone. They had heard the warning sent out by the telephone girl, at least."

"Some of the people say the fire bell rang and they thought it was fire. Some of them rushed to the business section and were caught in the water, for that flood traveled like a race horse. Those not drowned were crushed in the crumbling buildings and others were caught in the flames. It was frightful. I can't begin to tell it all."

The work of rescue goes on. In labor is surcease from sorrow. The survivors must be housed and fed, life must go on. It is the will and spirit of Austin residents that will see us through this terrible time. Someday a new Austin will arise on the site of this devastation. But none will ever forget what was lost when the waters wrecked their vengeance on our town.

Bayless Statement

Bayless Company is 'greatly shocked' by disaster

F.J. Bayless of the Bayless Pulp and Paper Company gave the Associated Press the following statement.

"We are greatly shocked because of the loss of life, injury to persons and damage to property at Austin. We have taken steps to aid in the relief measures now going forward."

"The loss of our plant will not exceed \$100,000. It will in no way affect the solvency of our company as the value of our Canadian properties exceed the amount of our bonds."

"We have news that no Binghamton people were killed at Austin and only one slightly hurt. A large part of our plant remains uninjured save for water damage. The larger buildings are in fair condition."

"We believe that the loss of life will not exceed 100 and that the injured will number 300 at the most."

(From the Oct. 5, 1911, issue of the Potter Enterprise.)

Austin: Its Past, Its Present, and Its Prospect for the Future

ITS UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH

The Credit of the Whole Due to One Man—Frank H. Goodyear—His Start, Success, Etc.

This article, from the Dec. 23, 1887, issue of the *Austin Autograph*, reveals much about the way Austin was at the turn of the century, bustling into the twentieth century full of energy and boundless enthusiasm for the future. It tells as much about the spirit of the town as about its industries and leading citizens.

Much has been said of late concerning the new town in the southern part of Potter county, state of Pennsylvania, called Austin, and how few people within a thousand or more miles distance but what have heard more or less concerning this place, either by personal conversation, or through newspaper reports; but as all has not been stated in any one place, it is necessary to give the public a faint idea of what Austin has grown from—what it has grown to; and what was the cause of the unrivaled growth of this busy industrial center. In a word it may be said that the development of Austin, and in a measure, the Sinnemahoning Valley, is due to the energy and enterprise of Mr. Frank H. Goodyear, who is now known as the "lumber king."

Mr. Frank H. Goodyear, president of the Sinnemahoning Valley railroad, and operator of one of the most extensive lumber interests in the United States—located at Austin, Potter county, Pa.—was born in Tompkins county, N.Y., in 1849. From his early youth he has been most energetic, and the extensive business that he is now operating is but one of his many undertakings. Though he resides at Buffalo he has a fine residence in Austin, and spends a good amount of his time here, looking after the workings of the road and his lumber interests.

In 1880 A. Costello & Co., after traveling various sections of the state of Pennsylvania to ascertain the best location for a large leather tannery, came to the conclusion that the Sinnemahoning Valley possessed the largest amount of hemlock timber of any section of the state, and they built and are now operating one of the largest tanneries in the world, at the junction of the south and first fork of the Sinnemahoning. They became satisfied that this timber was not only of the very best quality, but also, that it could be peeled and taken to market at the least possible expense. They purchased a large amount of land, and the business of the tannery has developed quite a large village in that vicinity, which was subsequently named after the founder of the business—Costello.

After establishing this extensive business, Mr. Costello experienced one great difficulty—that being the lack of railroad facilities for shipping purposes—the nearest railroad station being Keating Summit, on the Buffalo, New York & Philadelphia Railroad, a distance of twenty-two miles, whereupon they were obliged to haul their hides, leather and merchandise over the highway to Keating Summit.

THE S.V. RAILROAD
In 1884 the negotiations were made wherein it was evident that this difficulty and inconvenience was soon to be overcome. Mr. Frank H. Goodyear, of Buffalo, N.Y., after careful examination became satisfied that this was the finest valley of hemlock and hardwood lands in this section of the country, and he purchased about 15,000 acres from Messrs. B.D. & Henry Hamlin, of Smethport, Pa. This was the initial movement of a series of bold financial operations which today finds such a rich field of success. To get this lumber to the market was the next problem and Mr. Goodyear determined to build a railroad.

In 1885 the first shovelful of dirt was thrown from the road bed and the difficult task of running a line over, the sharp turns and steep grades was begun. The road differs from others in the fact that the first object was to make it strictly a lumber railroad. Though this has been somewhat modified by the rapid settlement of the country and a resulting large passenger and freight business, yet the object has been adhered to in the extent of introducing many novel features. The

main line goes from Keating Summit, a small station on Western New York and Pennsylvania R.R., formerly B.N.Y. & P., to Costello, a distance of twelve miles. From the main line are numerous branches diverging at various places which go up small runs directly to lumber camps. These branches in all comprise about fifteen miles and are generally named after the contractor who is operating at the terminus.

Upon leaving Keating Summit the road climbs a heavy rise to the summit and then goes down a grade of about 150 feet to the mile. Owing to the conformation of the hills it takes a zigzag course and soon reaches the Austin branch of Freeman Run. The first station of importance is Austin, the next is Costello. Between Austin and Costello are vast piles of lumber on either bank of Freeman Run. The road bed is well ballasted and seventy pound steel rails are used. The road extends through Keating, Wharton, Portage and Sullivan townships.

There are two passenger trains daily over this road which connect with all the principal trains of the Western New York & Pennsylvania road, and although they make but three regular stops a person may be afforded a stopover anywhere along the line by simply signaling the courteous employees. In connection with the main line the Freeman Run Branch, and Dry Hollow Branch and Jones, Thomas, Crawford, Butlerland Shawley are some of the other names. It is up these various branches that one gets an idea of lumbering according to scientific principles. Though the yoke of oxen and the heavy horse team are still in use the steam locomotive is brought into operation in many ways, and the peculiar log cars do the work of wagons and sleighs in other sections.

The lumber camps employ about a hundred men at a given place, and they are boarded and lodged by the contractor. The Sinnemahoning Valley road operates three Shay engines which are really an object of curiosity to the average traveler. The pistons are on the side and operate up and down instead of horizontally as in the ordinary engine. The drives are small and the force is communicated to them by the means of cogs, a knuckle being so arranged that the piston will conform to the curve. These three engines weigh respectively, twenty-seven, thirty and seventy tons. They are built only by the Lima machine works, at Lima, Ohio. They are the most powerful of any locomotive constructed, and take a lumber train around a steep, sharp curve where an ordinary engine would refuse to work. Other engines such as the Baldwin, etc., are in use for passenger business. The depot at Austin is well built for a town of the size and the upper portion is used for offices of the officials. The future of the road is full of promise, as it may be extended southward and connected with several trunk lines, opening new fields and putting this country in direct communication with Philadelphia and the cities of the South. Mr. J. A. Skellton, the general superintendent, and all the directors are courteous and accommodating, ever ready to aid in any way those who are looking for places to locate, and having the best interests of Austin at heart.

THE LUMBERING, & C.
In 1885, Messrs. O.S. & J.G. Garretson, of Buffalo, N.Y., purchased from Mr. Goodyear all of the hardwood on this tract of land; and the following year built the finest sawmill in the state of Pennsylvania. This mill has two first-class circular saws, a forty-two inch Wicks gang, two heavy edgers, gang slathers, and the whole structure is built in the very best manner. The power is furnished by a 28-horse engine, built by Wright & Co., of Newburg, N.Y., and is probably the finest engine in use by any sawmill in the United States. Since its completion the mill has been in constant operation, its daily capacity being 150,000 feet. This mill cost about \$120,000.00 and is devoted exclusively to sawing hemlock lumber.

Mr. Garretson has since commenced the construction of a very large sawmill for the purpose of sawing the hardwood lumber on the tracts of land referred to; and expects to have it in operation soon. This mill will be a first-class one in all details. It will have a complete band saw, one circular, edgers, etc., and will be capable of cutting at least 60,000 feet of hardwood per day.

It will be seen from the above that the interests of Messrs. Garretson in Austin are not in the minority to those of Mr. Goodyear. Mr. Garretson is an energetic business man, and besides his extensive interests in Austin he is known as the head of the Buffalo School Furniture Co., and the Buffalo Hardware Co., located in Buffalo, N.Y. Besides building the two large mills in Austin, above referred to, he has built and furnished the largest store in Potter county, which is now under the management of Mr. W.C. Burrows, while his extensive lumber business is under the efficient supervision of Wm. H. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan is an energetic young man, possessing excellent judgment and rare business tact.

During the year of 1887 Blaisdell Brothers, of New York City, have built and are now operating in Austin the largest kindling wood factory in the United States. This mill cost upwards of \$60,000.00 and is of the most substantial character, being capable of manufacturing from five to ten car loads of kindling wood daily for the New York market, and when running full capacity will employ from three to five hundred hands.

Before the construction of the Sinnemahoning Valley railroad there was but one house where the village of Austin is now located. Mr. E.O. Austin had lived here for thirty years, cleared off his farm, and made himself a comfortable home. He has held the offices of postmaster and Justice of the Peace for a long period. In the short space of two years the place has grown into a population of fully 1500 people, and is still rapidly growing, having large stores and shops of nearly every nature. A new \$25,000.00 school building is about to be erected, and other buildings have gone up in innumerable numbers. The AUTOGRAPH, of which this is a sample copy, is an enterprise recently established, by Mr. A.J. Hughes, and while the paper speaks for itself, we must say that we are proud of our enterprise and the large patronage it is receiving.

There are four hotels, but they are not able to accommodate the public, and another one will soon be erected. Other parties are negotiating for a site to locate a bank, and it is expected that within the next twelve months the population will reach at least 3,000 people. Land cleared of timber may be bought from \$1 or \$2 per acre, and though the country is hilly, farming and stock raising may be made profitable. It is only a question of time when southern Potter is developed. Even now the lumber mills at Austin run out over 40,000,000 feet of lumber per year and the new hardwood mill will produce about 20,000,000 more.

The Sinnemahoning Valley road is doing a very large amount of traffic, it having five locomotives in constant service on its main line and branch roads. The branch railroads are built all through the forests, there being now over fifteen miles of these roads. They are laid with first-class steel rails and run off through the forest, and after the timber has been removed the rail is taken up, and placed the following year in other places; this is repeated from year to year. Over ninety log cars are in use, and about eighty cars of logs are delivered to the hemlock mill daily. At this season of the year over forty cars of bark are shipped daily to several points, principally to the tannery at Costello, to Boston, and to Buffalo.

This valley opens to parties contemplating the erection of tanneries, the finest sites, the largest amount of timber, the best facilities for handling their product of any place in the United States. The railroad company will make low rates and extend other

inducements to parties wishing to establish here; and the supply of bark is unlimited. It also affords the finest opportunity for any person wishing to establish manufactories for working up the large amount of hardwood timber in this vicinity. The railroad company in building its branch roads will haul the hardwood product to the mills, so they can have a daily supply. These roads are in constant operation, and with the facilities at hand, everything can be hauled at the lowest possible cost.

Parties desiring to locate a factory for working up the beech, maple, birch, basswood and other timber, will find this the very best place obtainable. To anyone wishing to locate a wood alcohol works, this is altogether the best location to be obtained. The wood can be cut and hauled to the works by means of the roads referred to, at a cost of not to exceed \$1.75 per cord, for foot lengths.

Mr. Charles W. Goodyear, vice President of the Sinnemahoning Valley road, has recently been taken as a partner in this extensive business. He is a native of Cortland county, N.Y.; a lawyer by profession, having practiced successfully for a long time in Buffalo, being a member of the firm of Cleveland, Bissell & Goodyear. He spends all of his time at Austin and his constant devotion to the duties of his office is shown by the smooth and harmonious workings of the several departments of the road and the lumber business. The Goodyear Brothers have since purchased large tracts of land, and now own over 60,000 acres of land in the valley of the Sinnemahoning and vicinity.

To conclude the whole, it may be truthfully said, that never has there been a place (save perhaps an oil town) built up in so short a time, and in such a substantial manner as Austin. For hunting and fishing this is the best part of Pennsylvania. Deer are abundant and larger game may be found. For the hunter or the tourist, the laborer or the capitalists the country traversed by the Sinnemahoning Valley railroad is unequalled.

—The first musical note of the whistle on the kindling wood factory was heard a week ago to-day, and we must say that part of the business is first-class.
(From the *Austin Autograph*, Nov. 25, 1887.)

—A good number of our young people attended the Thanksgiving ball at the Star Hotel, Costello, and report a very pleasant time. The attendance was large, and everything passed off in a most enjoyable manner.

—The sweet strains of music ushered forth beneath our window, and elsewhere on the streets last Saturday evening, by the Austin cornet band, led one to think they were an organization of years' practice. Never before have we known of a band of two months practice accomplishing as much of the musical art as has the Austin band. This is an interesting feature of our town, and should receive a liberal support.
(From the *Austin Autograph*, Dec. 2, 1887.)

—Hiram Bridges informs us that the Goodyear railroad is being built through his farm, up Jones Run, and that a good sized army of Italia's sons are quartered in and around his out-buildings. He thinks that when Mr. Goodyear gets his road built up the creek as far as he wants it, he will then return and put in a turn-table in his (Mr. B's) dooryard and build switches around his pit pen and chicken coop—because, you see, Mr. Goodyear "would dare stop his 'Royal ribs' when taking his road where he deemed—wait! wait?—Coudersport Workman. We would ask Mr. Bridges if this railroad trespassing does not increase the value of his land a little?
(From the *Austin Autograph*, Dec. 2, 1887.)

—The future prosperity of Austin is as sure as the coming of the millennium, as we are already dated for a circus in '88.

Port Allegany, Wednesday, Oct. 5.

The Largest and Best! Greater and Grander Than Ever!
IT IS COMING!
LET ALL REJOICE!

FRANK A. ROBBINS'
DOUBLE CIRCUS, MUSEUM, MENAGERIE

TRAINED ANIMAL PARADOX
WILL EXHIBIT AT
PORT ALLEGANY, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5.



WHAT YOU WILL SEE IN THIS
GREAT, NEW AND NOVEL SHOW!
TWO CIRCUS COMPANIES IN TWO RINGS!
DOUBLE ELEVATED STAGE PERFORMANCE!
MUSEUM OF HUMAN WONDERS!
MONSTER MENAGERIE OF RARE ANIMALS!

CHARLES W. FISH CHEV. IRA PAINE
The King of Monkeys of the World
A HERD OF MONSTER
EDUCATED ELEPHANTS!

\$125,000 ELEPHANT BAND
Performing on a variety of Musical Instruments.
LINDA JEAL ELENA JEAL
The Only Lady Banding Lady Artist

WILLIAM THE DAVENES' LLOYD
The Wonderful Animal Artist and Character Delineator.
Mlle. ALNA DANAJANATA,
THE ONLY CLOWN ELEPHANT

TEN FUNNY CLOWNS!
A HUNDRED BRASS PERFORMERS
From Every Branch of the Artistic Profession, forming
One of the Grandest and Greatest Exhibitions on Earth!

A FREE STREET PAGEANT
At 10 o'clock, the parade will be given at 10 o'clock, every day, except Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock, in the afternoon. The parade will be given at 10 o'clock, every day, except Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock, in the afternoon. The parade will be given at 10 o'clock, every day, except Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock, in the afternoon.

TWO PERFORMANCES DAILY. Doors Open at 1 & 6 P.M.
Which gives a full hour for seeing the many interesting wonders in the Museum and Menagerie, before the Circus Performance begins.

EXCURSIONS on all Railroads at a Reduced Fair for Round Trip.
Full particulars can be had from your Railroad Agent.

ADMISSION, 50 cents. Children, under 9 years, 25 cents.
Will also exhibit at Emporium, Thursday, October 6.

G. H. SPEARING,
Retail Dealer in
GROCERIES,
HATS AND CAPS,
CIGARS,
The Finest Stock of
CONFECTIONERY
IN TOWN.
Country Produce Bought and Sold.
Goods Delivered Free of Charge.
AUSTIN, PA.

WESTERN
New York and Pennsylvania R.R.
Formerly N.Y. & P.R.R.
TIME-TABLE IN EFFECT JUNE 1, 1887.

Northward	Buffalo Division	Southward
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At Austin	At Austin	At Austin
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THOUSANDS DEAD IN FLOOD AT AUSTIN, PA.

Johnstown Over Again Two Towns Wiped Out Dead May Be Over 1,000

Wall of Water 35 Feet High Sweeps Down Narrow Valley and Seizes Upon Austin Before Women and Children Had Chance to Flee to Safety

Gas Fire Adds to Horror Living and Dead Are Burned More Than 1,000 Buildings Down

Physicians, Nurses and Supplies are Being Rushed Over Mountains by Auto and Train to Stricken Villages. Red Cross and State Government Unite in the Work of Rescue.

These accounts of the Austin flood were carried on the front page and elsewhere in The Illustrated Buffalo Express of Sunday, October 1, 1911. They are a prime example of the exaggerations and erroneous reports circulated by large newspapers across the nation at the time of the flood. It must be remembered that truth and objectivity were not cornerstones of the newspaper industry in 1911. Sensational headlines sold as many newspapers then as they do now. However, in those days, editors were less scrupulous about making sure the sensational facts were actually true.

From a Staff Correspondent—Austin, Pa. At this hour the revised estimate of the dead is 600, of which 160 bodies have been recovered.

Reports from Costello say that that town has been wiped out, and the smaller town of Wharton cannot have escaped. It therefore seems conservative at this writing to state that the death-toll of this second Johnstown disaster will be at least 1,000.

The fire is still raging over three acres below the original center of the town. A train over the Pennsylvania brought a fire engine and firemen at 1 o'clock this morning. They are pumping water from Freeman Run, and directing their efforts to saving houses on the hillside.

The center of this town of Austin has been swept as clean as the dry bed of a river. The water has disappeared. The Buffalo & Susquehanna Railroad bridge has been washed far up on the hill.

Staff reporters for The Express who reached Austin from Buffalo at 1 o'clock this morning and who have canvassed the scene, are communicating with Buffalo from the home of A. R. Buck, which is on the hill overlooking the scene.

Indescribable confusion and Chaos
A revised list of the known dead obtainable at this hour includes:

Father and mother of State Senator Baldwin.

Mrs. Michael Collins, Senator Baldwin's sister.

Mrs. Charles Scofield.

Mrs. E. A. Mansuy and baby. She is the wife of Dr. Mansuy.

Mrs. Joseph McKinney.

Mrs. Wolcott.

Mrs. John Devereaux.

Mrs. Thomas Lawler and baby. Mr. Lawler floated down the stream with one of their children on a mass of debris. Both have been saved.

Mrs. James Leman and five children. Her husband was removed from the ruins of their house late tonight, badly injured and a maniac.

Miss Agnes Bacau.

Miss Martha Swald.

Miss Anna Jackson.

Miss Flossie Milzer.

(These last four were employees of the paper mill.)

Mrs. Fitzgerald, a widow.

Mr. and Mrs. William Nelson. Her body has been recovered, but his was not. He was a grocer. He rushed from his store to their house to warn her and both were caught.

Mrs. Lewis Ritchie.

Mrs. Peasley.

When whistles of the paper company and the girls of the telephone exchange sounded a warning of the approach of the flood at 2:30 o'clock, the main street of the town, which runs across the valley, was crowded with people.

Of the town's population of 3,000 and the usual number of visiting strangers, fully 1,500 were in the center of the town on this main street. Their road to

safety lay toward the hills in either direction, and though it was only three minutes before the business section of the town was overwhelmed, a large number of these people escaped.

Many houses were shoved sideways into the hill. Tremendous damage has been done by 180,000 cords of pulp wood which came down with the flood.

The fire is raging most intensely now at the plant of the Standard Wood Company. It seems to extend over about three acres.

Well-informed people here say that the reservoir behind the dam contained 500,000,000 gallons of water. It all rushed down at once in a wall that appeared 30 feet high, wrecking every structure in its path. The property loss can be estimated only in the most general terms. That it will run into several millions seems certain.

Hundreds of automobiles which have made their way from surrounding towns over the tortuous mountain roads are here with food supplies, doctors, nurses, and medicines. Several temporary hospitals and morgues have been set up. It will be impossible for several hours for rescuers to get to the actual center of destruction on account of the intense heat of the fire.

Looters are on the ground, but they will be routed by the state constabulary which is on its way here under orders from Governor Tener.

Anywhere from 500 to 1,500 lives were lost in the sweep of a huge wave through the cities of Austin and Costello, in Potter county, Pa., as the result of the bursting of a dam about one mile northeast of Austin at 2:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

The mountain of wreckage that constitutes all that is left of Austin caught fire and is still blazing furiously, roasting live and dead humans pinioned beneath it. The disaster is Johnstown repeated or worse.

It was the dam of the Bayless Pulp & Paper Company built in the bed of the west fork of the Sinnemahoning creek, in whose long, narrow canyon-like valley the cities of Austin and Costello lie. The dam was about 50 feet high and stretched across the entire width of the stream, which is about 600 feet wide. It held back waters that sustained a depth of nearly 50 feet for a distance of about a mile and a half, forming a long narrow lane containing many millions of gallons of water.

In the last two winters, the concrete wall of the dam had been considerably damaged by ice gorges, so that the company recently reinforced it by building another cement wall outside the original one. Two weeks ago there was a cloudburst which probably weakened the new wall. This gave way and with it the original wall, freeing the great volume of impounded water. Rushing through their natural outlet, the Sinnemahoning Valley, they bore down at passenger-train speed on the unarmed village of Austin; only a mile away, and a few minutes later on the village of Costello, half a dozen miles farther south.

No Warning for Austin

Both Austin and Costello lie in the long, narrow valley of the Sinnemahoning, in the foothills of the Alleghany Mountains. Austin has a few of its dwelling perched on the hillsides, but fully 2,000 of its 3,200 population live in the canyon-like valley. Its male residents were at work in the mills and factories and stores; its women and children at home or in the one long main street that traverses the mile length of the village. The rush of water

came upon most of them without more warning than the crash and crackle of timbers of the houses and other frame structures which collapsed under the impact of the immense volume of water and the jam of logs that it had carried down from the paper mill whose dam had burst.

Only the few folk who were on the elevated sides of the town and those who were miraculously caught in safe places on the wreckage and carried on the crest of the flood escaped with their lives. The former scurried up the sides of the valley when they heard the ominous booming of toppling buildings to the east and saw the mountain of wreckage being borne on foaming, furious waters toward them.

The rest of the populace was drowned or crushed to death in the wreckage, with barely time to utter a horrified gasp, or injured to the extent that many of them will die.

In the neighboring village of Costello the situation was much the same, although the depth of the water that descended on it was somewhat lessened by the distance it had traveled and the consequent increased section of its cover. The entire residence section of this village, which like Austin, lies in the valley, was swept away and most of its 1,200 inhabitants were caught in the flood and wreckage. Costello, however, escaped the added horror of fire.

The loss of property, which included, besides practically all of the homes in both villages, many paper mills, lumber mills, tanneries, kindling-wood and crate mills, railroad buildings, public buildings and business blocks, will amount to several millions of dollars.

Railroad Destroyed

In the few minutes that it took the front of the huge wave to traverse the town all communication with the outer world was cut off. Telegraph and telephone poles and wires were uprooted and torn away, and the roadbed of the only railroad touching the city, the Buffalo & Susquehanna, was destroyed.

There was no opportunity to send a warning ahead to the village of Costello by wire or otherwise. No horse-back courier could take the thrilling message quickly enough to save lives. Besides, the few surviving and uninjured inhabitants of Austin were dazed for minutes to the point of paralysis by the suddenness of the disaster, and had no thought of more than the awful scene before them, involving the loss of their own kin and friends.

First News by Telephone

A foreman in the local office of a telephone company was one of the survivors first to recover their wits, and he sent out the first message that the outside world received. He saw the torrent and wreckage coming and dashed up the hillside, barely escaping it. With a loose ticker he connected with the intact section of a wire at the edge of the village and sent to Keating Summit, five miles away, the news that Austin had been swept out of existence.

From Keating Summit, the news was flashed to all other neighboring towns and counties and thence throughout the country. Preparations for rescue and relief have begun forthwith. These were first undertaken by Coudersport, Smethport and Port Allegany in Potter county, then the activities extended into neighboring counties, to Bradford and other cities, and then across the New York state line into Cattaraugus county, Olean joining with other towns in sending fire engines and firefighters to the scene to try to put out the holocaust among the wreckage. Their arrival was too late to stem the advance of the



The Bayless paper mill at Austin which was operated by water-power for which the concrete dam was built. This was the first property in the path of the destructive flood. According to latest reports it has been swept away.

The latest estimate of the number of lives lost in the deluging of Austin and Costello, Pa., through the bursting of the Bayless Pulp & Paper Company's dam, is 1,000.

At 2:30 o'clock when this edition went to press, the number of bodies recovered at Austin was about 500.

Millions of dollars of property damage was done. The immense wall of water 35 feet high that was freed when the newly built concrete dam gave way, tore through the narrow valley in which both villages lay, overwhelming all save those who were on the hillsides, crushing the buildings, mostly frame, like eggshells, and throwing the wreckage high into the air and carrying it and the victims along on the crest of the flood. Over 1,000 buildings are wrecked.

The fire, which blazed in the wreckage from broken gas pipes, is still raging, burning hundreds of bodies, dead and alive.

Michael Murn, burgess of Austin, is among the missing and is believed to have been drowned. The senator himself was injured.

Adjutant General Stewart and a large force of state police have been dispatched to guard the ruins and preserve order.

flames which continued to consume the wreckage and the bodies that could not be reached and extricated in time.

Relief Trains To Scene

Relief trains from Olean, Smethport, Coudersport, Saint Mary's, Galton and more distant points were arriving every few minutes last night, bringing fire apparatus and scores of physicians, nurses and hospital apparatus. The local hospitals having been swept away, the setting up of temporary hospitals and a morgue was begun.

These improvised shelters were immediately in use. Within a few hours 40 bodies were collected, and scores of maimed survivors were under the care of physicians. Nevertheless, organization and system were so imperfect that many persons were dying unattended. The state constabulary was being rushed into town to do relief work.

F. A. Lehr of Buffalo, secretary and treasurer of the Goodyear Lumber company, reports a talk he had last night with Father Sheehan of Coudersport, who was among the clergymen who went to the scene and gave what aid they could. Father Sheehan administered last rites to many of the dying and hastened back to Coudersport to organize a relief movement. He told Mr. Lehr that Governor Tener and the charity organization were organizing a force for the relief of the refugees on the hillsides. Washington reports that Red Cross society relief has begun and will be continued with all diligence. Messages of sympathy and substantial aid in the shape of groceries, clothing and medicines have begun to arrive.

Glare of Flames

At 8 o'clock last night, while the relief work has been pushed, the heavens were aglare from the burning wreckage. The water was receding and some of the buildings of brick or stone that had in part withstood the shock were viewable at a distance.

The First National bank was all demolished. The postoffice, which was on elevated ground, had six feet of water in it. Few other buildings stood up under the onrush and everywhere the valley that formed the site of the town is strewn with charred ruins or timbers that must be traversed by flame by this morning.

As the general situation appeared to that at Austin last night, the town is dazed by the suddenness and extent of the catastrophe and will not be prepared for systematic rescue and relief work for hours.

City Officials Missing

Burgess Michael Murn has not been located and it is believed he has been drowned. Other city officials are among the missing. Hundreds of men, women and children are searching the ruins for their families and friends. The only light they had to work by last night was the glare of the burning wreckage, the local lighting plant and entire equipment having been destroyed. The origin of the fire was broken gas pipes that ignited almost before the flood had passed.

Wire communication was re-established in Austin late last night, and from there this description of the situation came:

"Chaos reigned from the moment the mighty wall of water tore through the town. Many bodies lie in the track of the flood."

"The dam was built two years ago, a great structure 530 feet long, spanning the little valley formed by Freeman run,

and rising to the height of 49 feet. It was of concrete, 32 feet wide at the base, and said to be constructed after the most modern plans. The basin behind it had never been filled with water until this week and today it was noticed that water was running over the top of the structure. Many persons went out from the town, 1 1/2 miles away, to see the unusual sight and it was while they were watching the overflowing water that the first break occurred."

Eyewitness's Story

"It was a wonderful sight," said Harry Davis, a Buffalo & Susquehanna locomotive engineer who was in the little knot of persons near the dam.

"There was nothing to indicate that the dam was about to give way, and someone had just remarked about its strength when, with a sharp report, a hole appeared in the west end. In a moment water poured through and it was immediately seen that the hole was getting larger. In a minute it was twenty feet wide and extended almost the entire height of the dam. There was another report and it seemed as if the whole structure was giving way."

"With a cry of alarm I fled to the nearest high ground and persons scattered in every direction. It was apparent that all the great body of water behind the dam was going out. Some were caught and before I could tell what was happening the water was tearing down Freeman Run, a wall of 50 feet high and sweeping everything before it."

Central Didn't Answer

"The sound was deafening. There was a house close by, and I rushed to the telephone and called central in Austin. She did not have much time to sound a warning, but I think she did her best. I guess she is dead. I have not heard anything about her since."

Houses Crushed Like Eggs

"I came down to Austin as soon as possible but it was an awful sight. The water had torn through the place, taking all the principal buildings and crushing houses like eggshells. Then the fire broke out. The timbers and sides of houses were piled up against the railroad shops and they were soon in flames. I know there were men in the shops—how many I cannot say—but there was no way to help them. They were probably burned up."

"I don't know how the fire started, but it seemed as though it began in a score of places at once. The postoffice escaped, but nearby was a store and there the flames appeared first. Then I looked for the Bank of Austin, but it was gone."

Women Worst Off

"But worst of all were the cries of the women and children. Most all the men were at work and they were at home alone. They had heard the warning sent out by the telephone. At least, some of the people say the firebell rang and they thought it was a fire. Some of them rushed to the business section and were caught in the water, for that flood traveled like a racehorse. Those not drowned were crushed in the crumbling buildings and others were caught in the flames."

Children Caught By Flood

"Little children playing in yards at home were caught up by the water and tossed about on the flood like playthings. Cattle and horses were swept off and even the sidewalks were torn up. I never imagined there could be such force. And over and above it all were the shrieks of the hundreds of

poor people who could not escape. I don't know how any of us got away."

It is estimated tonight that 1,000 buildings have been torn from their foundations and crushed in the flood or have been destroyed by fire. The water made its way through the business section and left only four buildings standing. The valley of Freeman's Run is narrow and the town was built along its banks. All the buildings in the lower part of the valley were swept clear of their foundations by the torrent and many of those who remained quickly fell a prey to the flames. There was no one to attempt to stop the fire and it was allowed to burn itself out, the survivors of the flood standing idly on the hillsides, stunned beyond the power to act.

Feeble effort was made in the lower part of the town where the flood soon spent its force, to save property and lives, but it was sporadic. The full force of the catastrophe could be seen from that point perhaps better than from any other and all efforts were abandoned. It is rumored that some lives were saved at this point, but if they were, the names of the persons have not been obtained.

The scene in the village tonight appalling. Here and there can be seen the light of some torch or lantern as a distracted father searches along the banks of the flood for some evidence of his family and home. Men who a day ago were among the most level-headed in the community know not what to do. There is no leader and hundreds are waiting for morning before they will attempt to act. The few who are trying to bring some order out of chaos are discouraged by the cries of the bereaved and unfortunate. The extent of the disaster will not be known for hours.

The only warning that the citizens of Austin received of the impending disaster, other than the noise of the onrushing waters themselves, was the blowing of the local fire whistle a very brief time before the deluge reached the town.

Dr. McQuinn's Story

Dr. McQuinn of Elmira, who was in one of the hotels in Austin, all of which were destroyed, tells this story:

"I was in the Davis house when the fire whistles blew. My companion left the hotel to see where the fire was. He came rushing back saying a great wall of water was coming. We had about three minutes' warning. I hurried up the street and in the excitement was knocked down by a wild horse. I just got out of harm's way when the wall of water swept by, carrying men, women and children on the debris."

"I saw one child about six years old on the debris. She was covered with mud and dirt and was rescued as the water rushed by. One little girl not more than 1 1/2 years old was thrown out on the bank and saved. As soon as the wall of water struck the town it broke the gas mains and started the fires."

High-School Children Escape

The high school in Austin is situated on the high ground and an entertainment of the children was being held when the flood passed. This saved the 200 children there assembled.

The paper mill was not running when the flood came and only a small force was at the mills. Four girls in the building went down with the flood and the entire plant was carried away.

Moving-Picture Audience Engulfed

Among the buildings that were high enough to escape inundation is the Austin hospital, and this is being filled with injured. It is said that a score of persons of the number drowned were among those in attendance at a moving picture show.

Engulfed While Fleeing

The Bell Telephone Company's Austin manager, Siemp, reported to Division Manager S. S. Eberts at Harrisburg that he escaped the disaster narrowly. He says:

"The water swept down on the town without warning. It appeared to fill the valley from side to side and the fury of the flood was so terrible that it seemed to tear houses to pieces and hurl the wreckage high in the air."

"I saw the water engulf people on the streets as they were running for their

lives toward the hillsides. The company's telephone exchange was wiped out and I believe all the operators are lost."

Dam Gave Trouble Before
The dam which gave way had 30 feet of impounded water at the breast. It was built across from hill to hill, catching the entire drainage of a large creek, the water of the dam backing for three fourths of a mile. It was the power source for the Bayless Pulp & Paper company's big mill just at the edge of Austin.

A year ago last spring this dam gave way and a portion of the town was inundated, and for several days the 2,000 inhabitants of the town were compelled to camp out in the snow on the hills for fear that a deluge would sweep down upon their homes.

This calamity so frightened the people that an agitation for the dam's removal was begun. The company was finally given permission to rebuild and the breast of the dam was constructed of reinforced concrete. This gave way today under the tremendous pressure of water back of it, and it is said to have toppled into the ravine like a dislodged wall. The anchorage at the end of the concrete gave way.

Though there is telephone communication between the dam and the mill, the whistle of which was set to roaring when the news of the break came yesterday, the awful flood of water was upon the town before the people knew of the danger. It was a perfect day, from the weather viewpoint, and many people were upon the streets. The coming of the water was accompanied by a roar like a dozen railway trains, but its advance was ten times quicker and its force a giant.

Fighting Against Cremation
Efforts to prevent cremation of living persons in the wreckage were carried on all last night. Rescue parties were trying to reach the pulp mill, where, it is reported a number of men escaped the flood. Men, women and children are also reported alive in the wreckage of the buildings in the central section.

At midnight relief vehicles were reported lined up for two miles each side of the stricken town of Austin waiting to enter with supplies and assistance. By morning a relief committee, headed by Lawyer Swetland of Coudersport, will have turned the school building into a morgue and receive bodies as fast as they are recovered.

Sinnemahoning Villagers warned.
The flood did not stop at Costello, but continued on down the valley. It is reported that the valley was swept for a distance of twenty miles. At 7 o'clock the inhabitants of Sinnemahoning, who had been warned by telephone, from Costello, had deserted their homes in the valley and were awaiting the passage of the flood, from secure points on the hillsides. The wave arrived at 10 o'clock, but had spread out so that it was only ten feet high, and comparatively little damage was done.

Hundreds Drowned At Costello
A survivor from Costello reached Austin at 10 o'clock last night. He said that there was hardly a sign of life in Costello. Whether most of the citizens of Costello perished in the flood or fled to the hills, he could not say. He believes, however, that two thirds of the population are dead. Practically every building in the town was leveled by the torrent.

Late last night it was reported that fire had broken out in several points in Costello.

Costello, Potter county, three miles down the valley from Austin, has a population of 800. Tanning is the chief manufacturing in this town and it is reported the tanneries were destroyed. Wharton, five miles farther down, was seriously damaged. Loss of life un-

SCENES AT DUSK

Austin, Pa., September 30.—Scenes of indescribable sadness marked the village during the early hours of the night. Many women who had lost their children wandered in the darkness, crying their names in the vain hope they would answer, while here and there a worn and broken man stood at the ruins of his home dazed, wondered when the bodies of his family would be found. Many were burned in the fire and others were ground to pieces by the masses of timbers and stone swept down by the flood.

The terrible force of the water is shown by the story of one man who tonight declared he had seen a two-story brick building crumpled like a house of cards. Residences suffered because of their construction and while no accurate estimate of the damage can be made now it is stated that there are not enough houses left in the village to cover the survivors.

Bodies Burned In Car Shops
The railroad shops where the debris piled high, and which resisted for a time the force of the water, will probably prove to be the death chamber of the majority of men who were employed there. A rescuing party attempted to reach the interior of the ruins, but was driven back by the smell of burning flesh. Strong men became cowards and until help comes from the outside little can be done to ascertain the loss or succor the injured. Those fortunate to live above the line of flood were called to help the survivors from the valley. The food supply was soon exhausted, as every grocery with the exception of one small establishment was swept away by the flood. Many went without their supper, and unless help comes they will have no breakfast tomorrow.

Continued on Page 6

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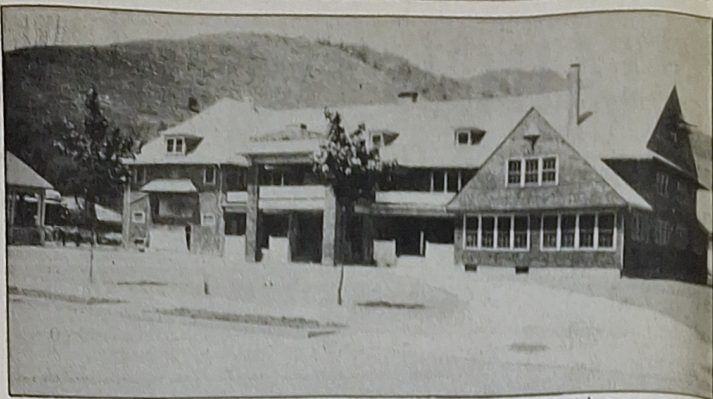
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Austin Community Club was nearly completed when this photo was taken.

Full Day Of Celebration Opens Community Club

Opening Day Festivities a fitting salute to Austin's 'dream come true'

The Austin Community Club opened on Sept. 6, 1920, Labor Day, with a day-long celebration.

Festivities began at 10:00 a.m. with the Austin Band in concert on the bandstand.

At 11:00 open house inspection tours of the new facility were conducted. Music resumed at 11:15 played by the Galeson Band assembled on the Club's balcony.

At noon, lunch was served at various sites in the neighborhood, since no single place could possibly have

handled the throngs of sightseers.

All the bands assembled for the day's third concert at 2:10 p.m.

At 2:45, following the expected speeches by local and visiting dignitaries, a movie was shown in the club's new 400-seat auditorium.

For those not interested in the movie, Houghton's Orchestra provided music for afternoon dancing.

At 3:15, the Austin Band led a parade to the local baseball field where a championship game pitted

Wellsboro against Port Allegany (no event in the area being considered complete without at least one baseball or football game).

One of the tireless bands provided another concert at 5:00 p.m., followed by a second movie at 7:30 and another band concert. Then the Houghton Orchestra returned to play for an evening dance complete with refreshments. The club finally closed at 2:00 a.m.

It took 10 committees to plan and carry out the grand opening. Even then Austin

residents were working together to make their dreams come true, spending time and energy to get done whatever needed to be done.

In addition to mill owner Bayless, Senator Baldwin, Methodist pastor H.S. Ward and Father Kenney, many residents worked long and hard on the opening. Among them were the Rotellos, Coopers, Williams, Rosenblooms, Murrins, Nuschkes, Hernquist, Wisens and Hooftallens—names that echo still in the hills of the Freeman Valley.

Austin Community Club Was Hub Of Town's Social Life

It is hard to believe that just nine years after the Bayless dam wiped out much of downtown Austin, the hardy citizens of that town gathered to dedicate the Austin Community Club on September 6, 1920.

But there it was, a handsome edifice eventually costing \$100,000 a sum that meant a bit more in 1920 than it does today.

The club's opening day booklet credited "the 'get together' spirit that has always characterized Austin and led us to accomplish the almost impossible."

Austin had certainly had its "almost impossible" times, from bad fires to the 1911 disaster to the ups and downs of the lumber industry.

From a population of over 3,000 around the turn of the century, population had dropped to 700 following the disastrous flood. However, with the rebuilding of the Bayless Paper Co. it had climbed back to 1,750 by 1920.

At that time Austin shared in the optimism of post-WWI America. The world was at peace, technology had made enormous strides, commerce was booming and anything seemed possible.

Once solely a lumber town, Austin had benefited from the prosperity of the tanning industry, and in 1920 sported a railroad, the Bayless mill, a chemical plant and a silk mill. A new industry, Wood Products Co., was about to open.

Culturally Isolated However, located as it is in the mountains south of the county seat, Austin was as isolated geographically then as it is now.

Off the "beaten track," and having no suitable place for entertainment, Austin's cultural life left something to be desired, at least in the opinion of some, including S.C. Bayless, the town's largest employer, and Senator Frank E. Baldwin, a native son who had made good.

They, along with many in the business community, decided that what the town needed was a place "to furnish the best of entertainment and education for all classes," as that same opening day booklet put it.

Initial construction financing came, not surprisingly from the Bayless Manufacturing Corp. The company agreed to match the funds raised through subscription.

The subscription took the form of \$50 shares in the club. Bayless guaranteed a five percent annual dividend on each share.

After that initial investment (which built a building that would cost several million dollars to build today), the club became self-supporting through admission fees

and other such charges.

Described in the booklet mentioned above as a "common meeting ground for all," the club offered a good deal, from a ballroom to tennis courts to a movie theater.

It very quickly became the center of social life in the small community, offering a variety of recreational activities, somewhere to meet for lunch or tea, a location for community events and special occasions and a place to enjoy good times with family, friends and neighbors.

Reading about it now, one thinks, "It must have been wonderful."

'No Dance Too Large'

The upstairs ballroom was touted as "the largest in the Northern Tier" at 55 x 85 ft., with a hard maple floor. "All are assured of ample space and no dance will be too large," promised that souvenir booklet.

The choice dance floor was put to good use for high school proms, club dances, parties of all kinds. Many current residents can remember when it was turned into a skating rink, and recall the many Austin High School basketball games played there prior to construction of the new school.

Probably one of the most popular attractions of the club, right from the beginning was the theater, complete with balcony, which was in operation until the 1960s.

At the outset, the club promised "to show only pictures of the highest class," and advised that "it will pay people from the surrounding towns to come to this theatre for the evenings as they will see the best in pictures." Top quality film projectors and excellent acoustics helped it live up to that promise.

The theater was also used for stage productions, having a large elevated stage with side rooms for costume changes.

In addition, it made the perfect setting for Austin High School Commencements, high school plays, community shows and more.

Restaurant Too

There was a restaurant and tea room, described in the introductory booklet this way.

"This Tea Room and Restaurant should prove alluring to people from all surrounding country. There are good roads to Austin from everywhere, and can't you see the attractiveness of spending your Sunday or that holiday through the week at this spot where you are assured of good meals, music, spacious parlors and reading rooms, broad verandas, excellent lawns, tennis courts and croquet grounds—not only this for the grown-ups, but sand piles, slides, swings for the smallest, but most impor-

tant members of the family." Yes, it must have been wonderful.

Also on the ground floor were club offices, a store selling candy and tobacco and a soda fountain. A bowling alley on the Turner Avenue side is recalled vividly by many area residents who risked it all setting pins for bowlers there.

In the beginning, special "days" were held and trainloads of visitors would come in from neighboring communities for Smethport Day or Port Allegany Day. Residents from nearby Costello made good use of the facilities too and a goodly number of visitors came over Keating Summit from Emporium to enjoy what the club had to offer.

Weekends, of course, were the busiest times, but folks came around during the week as well, especially in summer.

It must have been wonderful.

While it lasted. But nothing lasts forever, especially not in Austin, if its history is any indication.

Damaged By '42 Flood Once again, the weather had a hand in things. The 1942 rampage of Freeman Run took no lives and was certainly less devastating than the 1911 catastrophe, but it did much damage to the

Club House.

The basement facilities never recovered, and some repairs to other parts of the structure were never completed. The absence of the younger generation of adults during World War II and a dwindling population contributed to the decline of interest and the help needed to refurbish the building.

Changing tastes in entertainment, changing attitudes, and the coming of television also led to less use of the deteriorating facilities. The new high school gym was used for proms and basketball and other events that had taken place at the club.

In the end, the Austin Community Club was, like many other seemingly "permanent" things, a victim of the changing times.

So eventually the Club made way for another kind of community center. When the Austin Volunteer Fire Company needed a large, centrally located tract on which to build facilities, it was able to utilize the lot where the Club had been.

The club is gone. Those who remember it in its heyday are fewer than they used to be. Those who are too young can only read the history of the place and think to themselves, "It must have been wonderful." It was.

Two Women Heroines Of Disaster

Two women stand out in bold relief of the story of Austin's destruction, two women of utterly opposite characters and places in Austin's little society. If 200 of the 700 in the path of the flood are still living, they owe their preservation to these two women.

One was Cora Brooks, a social outcast. The house in which she lived was known in Austin as "No. 31." Good women even now lower their voices when they speak of Cora Brooks and the place in which she lives in the outskirts of the town. So far from decent society has she been crowded that her house was within a stone's throw of the Bayless dam. It was Cora Brooks who first saw the danger. She called on the phone to the Bayless powerhouse to have the warning whistle blown. That was her part in saving perhaps 200 lives.

The other woman is Kathleen Lyons, known and respected, and loved by all of Austin. She was the operator in the telephone exchange. She caught the message of Cora Brooks, and immediately turned the alarm in to every telephone from which she could get an answer. Scores testify today that they owe their safety to the message they received from Kathleen Lyons. Miss Lyons and her chief operator, Miss Lena Binkle, remained at their post until the flood actually dashed against the doors of the building, and as they fled to safety up the hillside, the telephone exchange building collapsed.

That is the story of those who are saved. Even Austin does not know yet the awfulness of its own calamity. To a stranger who sees the desolate site for the first time today, it is almost impossible to believe that a town ever was there. There is not even a foundation or a cellar to show where the buildings have been.

The Presbyterian and the Methodist churches were imposing brick structures. Nothing marks their site today, except level sand and gravel. Not a brick, not a stone can be seen. Where Main Street was there is now mud to a depth of three feet.

(Reprint from the October 2, 1911 North American, a Philadelphia newspaper. Like so many other distant newspapers of the time, the "facts" of this report must be taken with more than a grain of salt.)

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A view of Austin before the flood of 1911.



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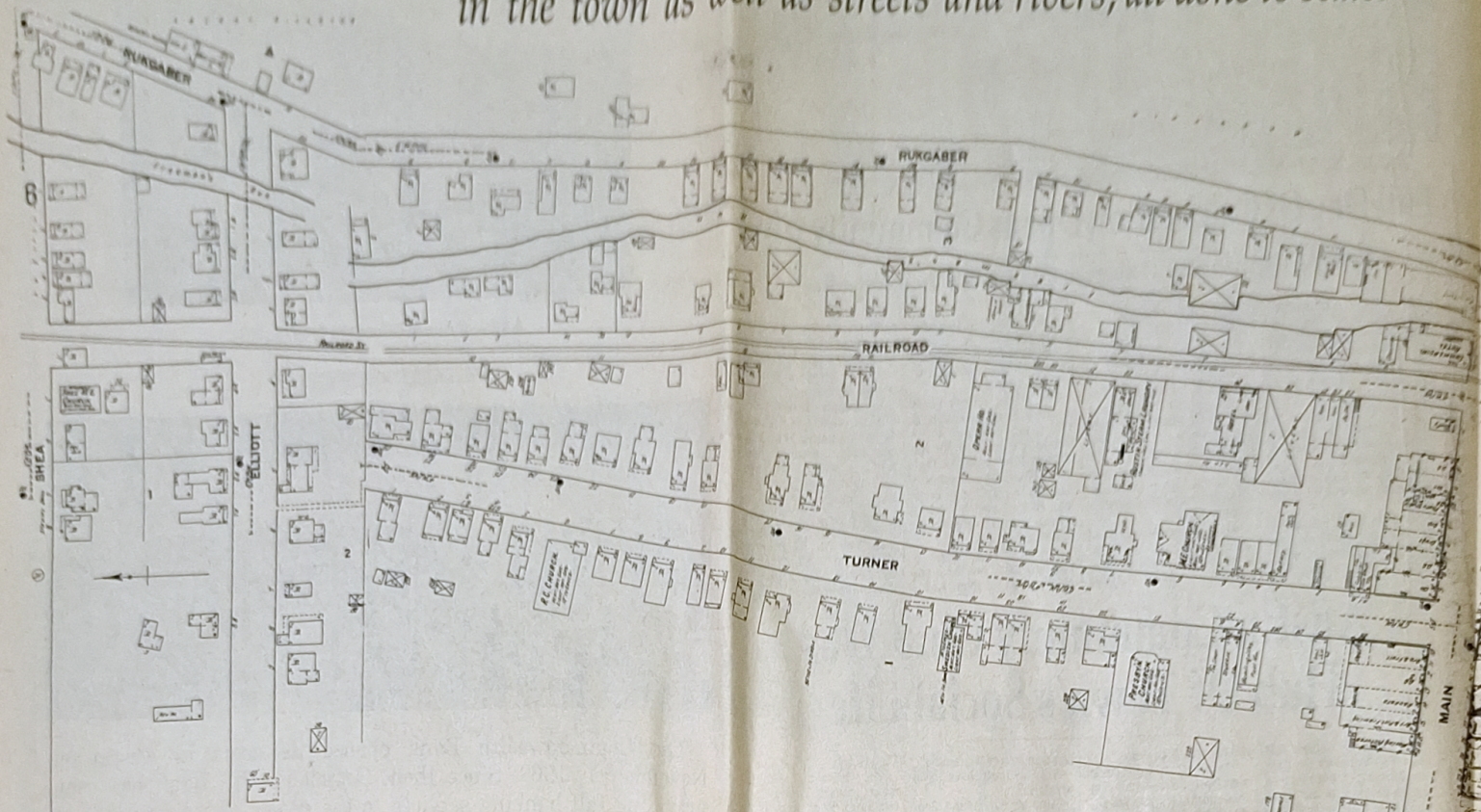
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A map of the town as it appeared before the flood, showing structures in the town as well as streets and rivers, all done to scale.



This is how the Bayless mill looked in the early 1900s, when it contributed to the booming prosperity of Austin. The mill was above town, (off town map, above) between Austin and the dam, which provided the mill's water supply.

The Austin Autograph had been publishing for 13 years when George C. Bayless of Binghamton, N.Y., took notice of the booming little town sitting snugly among the hills of southern Potter County.

What Bayless really took notice of was the timber growing on the sides of those steep hills.

In 1900, Bayless started construction of a large pulp and paper mill at the north end of town.

According to Victor Beebe's history of the era, "After considerable negotiation between the company and the citizens of Austin, who were represented by W.H. Sullivan, an agreement was signed June 6, 1900, locating the plant at Austin, right of way to be furnished for a switch to the plant and some other concessions to be made by the citizens."

With more and more hills being stripped of their lumber, the realization was dawning that the large lumber mills would not be around forever.

However, it seemed to the people of Austin that even if the big mills went, the paper mill would not. It used waste wood from the hemlock mills, softwood trees, topplings too small for the lumber mills, as well as regular cordwood, making it look like a better long-term bet.

It was the dawn of a new century. Optimism went hand in hand with the rugged individualism that had kept Austin alive in spite of many disasters. Austin citizens looked at the huge mill going up and decided they had nothing to worry about.

An earthen dam was built across Freeman Run in 1901 to provide water for the mill, replaced by the ill-fated concrete dam in 1909.

Accounts of the time describe the mill as "modern in every particular," turning out 50 tons of paper a day with the labor of nearly 300 men and paying out wages of \$11,000 a month.

Already at the turn of the century, electricity was beginning to play a part in industry, and the mill used both electric and coal-powered steam to grind upwards of 100 cords of wood per day.

It had electric lighting and hot-air heat. A contemporary newspaper account valued the mill at "not less than \$600,000."

By 1910, there were 2,941 souls calling Austin home, and that number was due in large part to the paper mill, for the big Goodyear lumber mills, as some had foreseen, finally came to the end of what had seemed a never-ending supply of hemlock and hardwood. They closed only months before the dam broke and washed away much of the Bayless operation.

Bayless decided to rebuild after the flood. An auxiliary dam had been built in 1910, upstream from the big dam, and this was utilized by the company to get things going again.

There were suits brought by those who lost loved ones and/or property in the flood, but most were settled out of courts. Nobody wanted to make Bayless angry. Austin needed the mill more than ever.

By 1913, the mill was the only industry in Austin, following the demise of the Emporium Lumber Co., another major mill in the town. (Also shown on the map.)

Bayless continued to operate, but the changing times made life more difficult for the mill owners.

First accused of polluting the streams in the area in 1903, the mill was brought to court several times over the next 10 years.

According to Beebe's history, "The First Fork of the Sinnemahoning had become such a stinking, noisome torrent of refuse that fish were exterminated and farmers were even obliged to fence their cattle away from the river, though it is claimed that this juice

from the pulp mill, however offensive its odor might be, was not injurious to health, and contained no disease germs, being too corrosive in its nature."

Local courts were not willing to rule otherwise, perhaps being overly conscious of the amount of money and jobs the Bayless mill represented.

Eventually though, the state stepped in and the mill was forced to institute a filtering system.

By 1920, George Bayless was considered a leading citizen of the Austin even though he did not live there year

'round. His company matched funds raised by the citizens of Austin to build an up-to-date community club that became the center of Austin's social life and the envy of every town in the area.

Local researcher Ila Kilbourne Langford records that Stanley Bayless inherited operation of the mill when his father, George, died in the early 20s—then along came 1929 and the Great Depression.

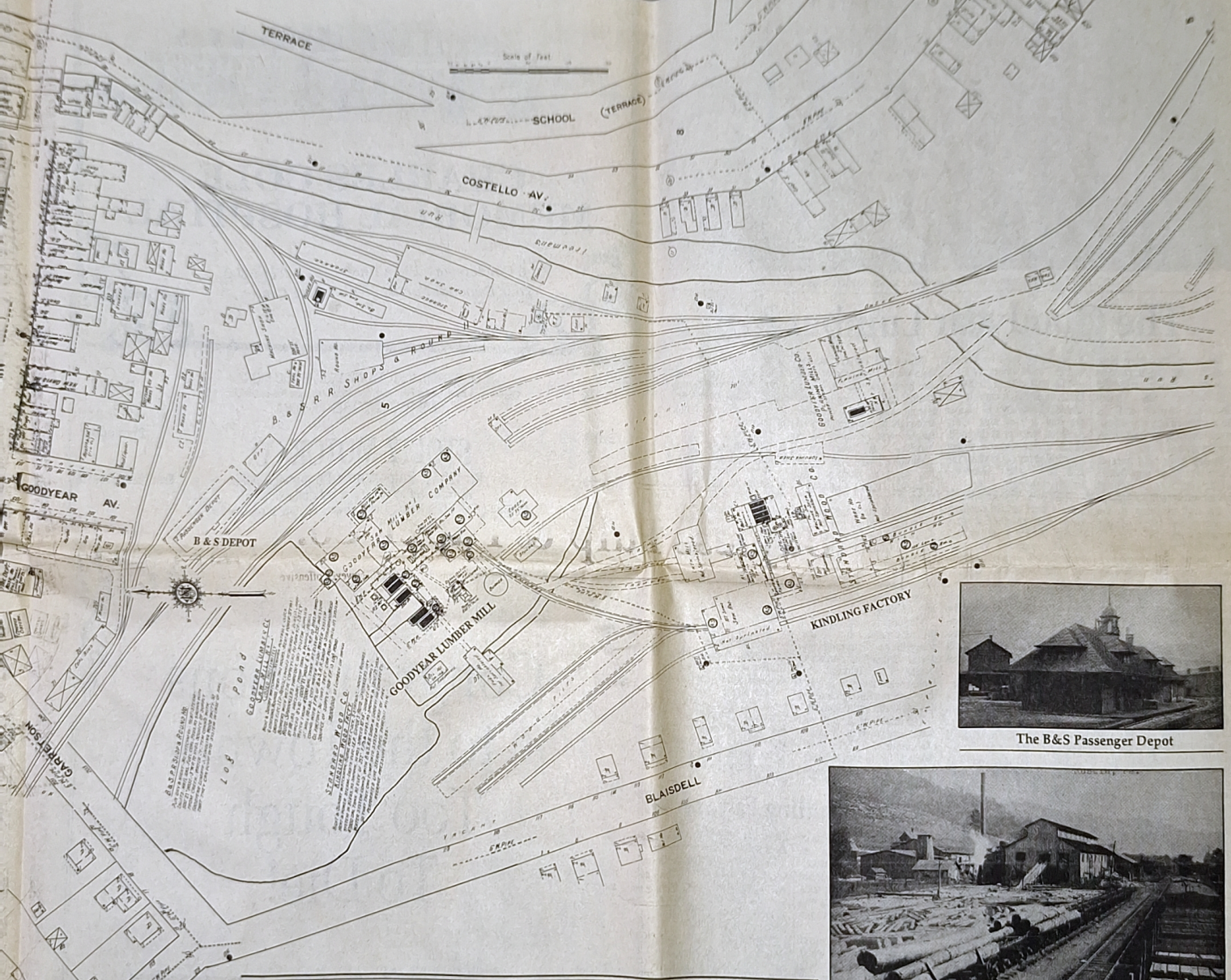
To illustrate how the local area was affected, Lant quotes *Potter Enterprises* stories of 1931 stating "Austin mills are running on but part time. The paper mill is operating three days a week and the silk mill is running with but a few employees," and "Bayless paper mill resumed operation Tuesday after an eight-day shutdown due to lack of orders and material."

According to Lant, the mill filed for bankruptcy in 1933, and was purchased by Veta Mines and renamed Williamson Pulp and Paper.

The mill had survived one flood, but it could not survive two, and in 1943 when the July rains poured millions of gallons over Potter and McKean Counties, the mill once again confronted raging waters from a broken dam. Salvage operations continued to the end of 1943 when a fire destroyed what was left and the mill became just another page in Austin's book of history.

18/11

This is an aerial photograph showing a residential neighborhood. Several houses are visible, some with distinct roofs and yards. A road or path runs through the area, and there are some trees and green spaces interspersed among the buildings.



The B&S Passenger Depot



Emporium Lumber Co., south of town (off map, above)

Emporium Lumber Co.

Closely allied to the Goodyear operation in the early years was the Emporium Lumber Company. According to Victor Beebe's early history of Potter County, this lumber mill was organized about 1882 by W.L. Sykes and William Calfisch, who first had mills in Benzinger, Elk County.

In 1899 the built a mill in Galeton. It wasn't until 1902 that they purchased a mill in Austin, one that had belonged to A.G. Lyman.

Until then the owners had purchased hardwood from various places and shipped it to their mill in Keating Summit. Goodyear was one of their main suppliers, since they had contracted with him for the hardwoods on his lands.

According to Beebe, Lyman sold his mill because he did not wish to purchase all the hardwoods on the Goodyear lands, being interested only in the choicer timber such as cherry, cucumber and ash.

According to other records, Lyman had contracted with O.S. Garretson, who had contracted with Goodyear to purchase the timber on Goodyear's land.

Eventually Goodyear and Garretson had difficulties, and Goodyear bought Garretson's mill. It was probably during this period that Lyman decided to sell the mill since he could not get the terms he wanted. Beebe explains that Goodyear wanted to sell the hardwood to a single buyer who would harvest the wood immediately after

Goodyear had taken all the hemlock out. That was the only way Goodyear would permit the buyer to use its train to remove the wood.

Evidently this was not agreeable to Lyman, but was quite satisfactory to Emporium Lumber, since with their additional mill in Keating Summit they would be able to handle the whole hardwood crop.

That it was a large operation is shown by the fact that the Emporium Lumber Company store at Keating Summit was the third largest store in the county in 1906.

It was in 1906 that Emporium Lumber added to its holdings by purchasing the Weidman Stave & Heading Co. of Hulls. Emporium Lumber was not directly in the path of the 1911 Austin flood and suffered little damage. The wood inventories of the mill at that time were valued at about \$150,000.

William Walker was put in charge of the mill when Lyman sold it, and a nephew, William Erhard was in charge when the dam broke.

Erhard's reminiscences paint a vivid picture of the exhausting schedule of workers in a lumber mill.

"I started in the yard at Austin in March, 1903, and I worked 66 hours a week. We worked 11 hours and 10 minutes each day, except on Saturdays when we quit at five instead of six. We worked six days a week and had only Christmas and the Fourth of July off—without pay. They also gave us two hours for dinner at Thanksgiving.

"I started at the magnificent salary of \$1.25 a day for piling lumber. They paid us once a month by check. On my first day I loaded 3x4s of heavy green hardwood onto a car. They were 12 to 16 feet long. There were just two of us to do the job. One man would slide the board off the top of the pile down to the other man standing on the dock. He would then load it onto the car. I was doing the loading onto the car. At first it was easy, but as the car was gradually loaded and the pile got higher, I had to lift and push the 3x4s up onto the top. After doing that all day, I was worn out."

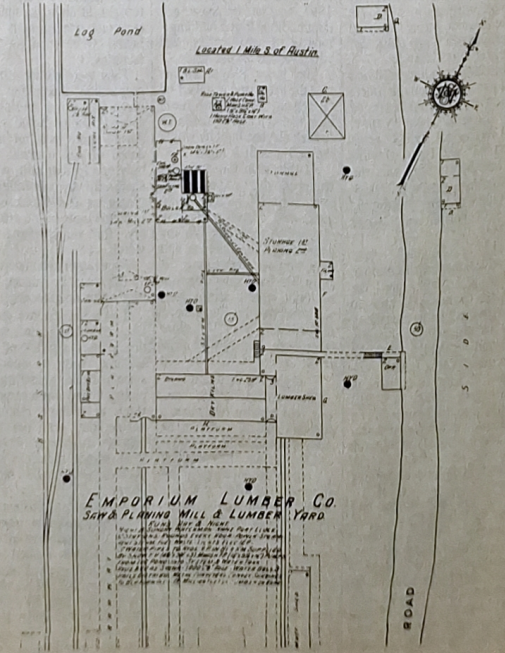
The difference between hemlock and hardwood sawing was emphasized by Erhard when he said, "It was not our purpose to cut as much as we could, but to use the logs to get the most top quality lumber cut out of a log. We might have averaged 20-25,000 feet maximum per shift."

The only unusual occurrence Erhard remembered from his days at the lumber mill was the flood of 1911.

At the Emporium Lumber mill, the flood waters did not carry the lumber away, but the wood was filthy from being in the water and each board had to be individually cleaned before it could be shipped.

The company closed its Austin mill in 1913, a victim of the reality that was confronting all the lumber mills—hillsides bereft of trees.

The Galeton operation of Emporium Lumber was the last branch to close.





Exterior and interior views of the Goodyear lumber mill, largest in town.

The Goodyear Lumber Mill

Enclosing numerous huge saws, a main engine rated at 525 horse power, and 200 employees, the main Goodyear lumber mill at Austin was rightly termed one of the largest in the world in its heyday around 1890.

Its log yards held piles of tree trunks 20 or more feet in height and lines of railroad cars moved speedily in and out of the mill property. In the decade before 1900, lumber was truly king.

As was the case with many other towns in northcentral Pennsylvania, the unrivaled growth of Austin and the Sinnemahoning Valley can be traced directly to the huge expanse of hemlock-covered acres on the hillsides surrounding the valley. The energy and enterprise of early entrepreneurs led to the success of several industries which fed on wood in one way or another.

First of these factories was the tannery built in 1881 by P.H. Costello at the junction of Freeman Run and the First Fork of the Sinnemahoning. The village which grew up around this huge mill was first called North Wharton, and later named Costello in honor of the businessman who sponsored its growth.

There was no railroad into Costello, however, and supplies and finished leather had to be hauled 12 hard miles up the mountain to Keating Summit, where the Buffalo, New York and Philadelphia had a line.

Goodyear Started The Boom
Enter industrial pioneer Frank H. Goodyear. This Grotton, N.Y. native, a former schoolteacher and bookkeeper, had entered the coal and lumber business in 1872. He was already active in local lumbering in Port Allegany, Wrights, and Sizerville.

In 1884, Goodyear decided that the best hemlock tracts were to be found in the area of the Sinnemahoning Valley, and he bought 15,000 acres from B.D. and Henry Hamlin of Smethport. This was the first of many purchases, which included property belonging to E.O. Austin and George Turner.

The following year Goodyear made up his mind to build a railway, and the famous switchback railroad soon wound its tortuous way up the mountain to Keating Summit. Although this built solely as a lumber railroad, it soon was hauling passengers over its cliff-hanging course twice a day on their way to faraway places.

Many miles of small branch railway lines led into the woods to individual logging camps.

Austin's big lumber mill was built in 1886 by O.S. Garretson, who had previously purchased hardwood from Goodyear. This was immediately the finest sawmill in Pennsylvania, complete with two circular saws, a 42-inch Wicks gang saw, two large edgers, a gang slasher and a 28

X 48 engine built by Wright and Co. of Newburg, N.Y.

The mill cost \$120,000 to build, and had a capacity of 150,000 board feet of lumber per day at that time. Only hemlock was cut at this mill. Much of Goodyear's timber was milled here between 1886 and 1897 when Goodyear bought it outright.

Bark was first shipped to Boston, but Costello's tannery soon became the primary market. Austin's lumber mill annually supplied the bark from 32,000 cords of hemlock to "the world's largest" tannery.

A second mill was built soon after, this one solely for the production of hardwood lumber. With one band saw and one circular saw, the mill produced 60,000 board feet of hardwood per day.

Millions Of Feet Of Hemlock
In 1886 the United Lumber Co., a syndicate headed by F.H. Goodyear, began operations as a trust. The next year it became F.H. & C.W. Goodyear, and the Goodyear Lumber Co. in 1900. Before opening its Austin mills, Goodyear was already cutting 160,000 board feet per day.

In 1897 F.H. and C.W. Goodyear had 80,000 acres of standing timber on the Susquehanna water shed with which to operate the two mills in Austin and one mill in Galeton for years hence. These lands contained about 15,000 feet of hemlock per acre and about 2,000 feet of hard wood. This would make 1.2 billion feet of hemlock and 160 million feet of hard wood.

The large mill at Austin was described in the Third Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture of 1897 as "an immense and commodious frame building." It was of two stories, and whitewashed on the inside.

The large Wright engine was the same one installed by Garretson. The engine room also had a large dynamo to furnish electric light by which the mill was lit at night.

At this time the mill was equipped with two band saws, one 50-inch Wick's Bros. gang, two edgers containing eight saws each, two slashers containing five saws each, and one trimmer containing 14 saws. The band saws were run by twin engine steam feed manufactured by Clark Bros. of Belmont, N.Y. The other machinery was run by rope feed.

From Log To Board
The carriage to the band saw was run by two men, a sawyer and a setter. The sawyer operated the log turner and the carriage. The setter set the log to the required dimensions it was to be cut.

The sawyer then moved the log (on the carriage) onto the saw and cut it into the dimensions as set by the setter. This board or slab of timber then dropped onto "live rolls" and was carried out. The carriage was then brought back to its original position by the sawyer, ready to make another cut.

Most mill owners at the time were of the opinion that the band saw was a better choice for such mills than circular saws. They claimed that eight to ten percent more lumber was produced by a bandsaw. It was more economical, with less of the log going to sawdust, and straighter lumber was manufactured by it.

The slabs cut from the logs were then carried out to the slasher, where they were cut into four-foot lengths and carried down a chute by means of an endless chain to a place where they were loaded, as all suitable refuse was then made into kindling.

The boards were carried in the same manner to the edger, where they were trimmed into stock widths. The remaining "cants" of six, eight or twelve inches were taken to a "gang saw" and run through into the desired width and thickness.

The oddity of the mill was that it was powered by means of ropes instead of belts. Seven thousand feet of manilla stavedore rope, one and one-quarter inches thick, was used. The

The Kindling Factory

One of the side-products of a lumber mill, often an unwanted waste, is slab-wood. The curved pieces of lumber sliced from the outer faces of a log are useless as boards and serve little purpose other than as a fuel.

If cut and dried in a careful manner, however, such wood makes a first-rate kindling material. Eager to make use of this by-product of the huge Goodyear mills, the Blaisdell Brothers in 1887 looked over the situation in Austin and recognized an opportunity to construct one of their celebrated kindling-wood factories.

They were pioneers in the preparation of kindling from green slab wood, and owned several such factories. In Austin there was an abundance of raw material from only one lumber mill, with a short tramway connecting the properties. The Blaisdells also invented most of the machinery for manipulating the wood.

They began to build on July 1, 1887 and in August 1888 production commenced.

If a kindling factory sounds like a rather outlandish operation, picture a 300 X 60 foot building with a wondrous system of belting, shafting and piping. There was a carpenter shop, a machine room, an engine room with two large engines, and a bank of boilers in fire-proof buildings some distance from the factory proper.

The wood from the hemlock mills was taken in trumcars along the trestleway in four-foot lengths as slashed at the mill. Each length was split and slashed or cut off in blocks three inches long by one and one-half inches wide. It was then taken by a system of carriers on endless chains to

endless ropes were run in grooved pulleys to prevent slippage. Such ropes were five times cheaper than belts and were not affected so much by dampness.

This was the only sawmill employing ropes for power transmission at the time.

Much machinery was necessary for care of the saws. Sharpening had to be done regularly, tension had to be adjusted, and new brazing was sometimes needed. All this machinery was manufactured by the Covell Manufacturing Co. of Chicago, Ill.

The mill's waste was made into kindling wood, with 30 cars a day being shipped out. Refuse not suitable for kindling was burned.

The mill pond was kept from freezing in the winter by feeding exhaust steam from the boilers back into the water.

This large mill ran 22 hours per day and had a daily sawing capacity of 300,000 feet. One hundred twenty-five men were employed on the mill and 75 men on the dock and yards. The monthly payroll averaged \$9,000.

the several huge kilns, where it remained until dry as a bone.

Six miles of steam pipe ranged through the kilns in such a way that the dry wood was always at the bottom, while the new, green hunks were poured in at the top.

People of the period remarked that the kiln chamber was a good place to take a sweat bath in.

An average of eighty cords of wood was run into and taken out of the kilns each day. Each bundle of wood pieces produced measured eleven inches by eight inches by three inches. They were bound with tarred hemp twine.

The 100 bundling presses in the factory were run by young people aged 15 to 20. The presses worked automatically at a touch of the foot. Bundlers easily bound 700 or 800 bundles per day, and nimble workers produced twice that many.

At 20 cents per hundred bundles, the children made excellent wages. (Some lumber mill workers made \$1.25 per day.) If work was completed in less than a full day, each bundler had the choice of staying to earn more or leaving early.

Try to imagine that a month's worth of bundles, if laid in a straight line, would reach nearly 200 miles, and that 600 miles of twine was needed to do up the job. Twine was purchased many tons at a time.

Some 100 railroad cars a month, loaded with 10,000 bundles each, carried the kindling wood to market in New York and Brooklyn. The wholesale price was \$1.20 per one hundred bundles.

The mill employed 170 persons with a total payroll of \$4,000 per month, which was always paid in cash.

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An Austin-Style Celebration

'I'll Show This Squirt Town What A Fourth Of July Celebration Should Be Like'

Austin at the time of the *Autograph* was a very lively place, enjoying the prosperity brought by the paper mills and tanneries. The men hired to do the hard work of lumbering the wood for these industries were a varied lot, including French Canadians, Scandinavians and other ethnic groups. Many immigrants worked in tanneries, the Polish and Irish were especially common. Today the heritage of this ethnic melting pot can be found in Potter County telephone books.

The lumbermen and laborers were a tough lot. They had to be to survive in the woods and factories of the day. They worked hard and "relaxed" harder.

To help them get relaxed, there were "pigs-ears," forerunners of the prohibition speakeasy, and also "drug stores" where alcoholic beverages were dispensed by a so-called druggist for "medicinal purposes." These drug stores were often found out in the middle of nowhere, sporting a few apothecary jars in the window filled with colored water, but dropping most of the pretense inside. There, the "sick" would line up at the counter each day for their "medicine".

The pigs-ears, however, made no effort at all to pass as legal businesses. They were the scenes of gambling, drinking and fighting, and were frequented by "fancy" women.

'Hicks' On Holiday

Perhaps it was fortunate that the "woodchicks" or "hicks," as they were called, did not get too many days off. Or perhaps it would have been better if they had, since they turned holidays into a shambles "letting off steam".

This was especially true on two holidays, Memorial Day and the Fourth of July.

Marie Kathern Nuschke, in one of her books of Freeman Run history, describes what happened on July 4, 1988, when the woodchicks came to Austin to celebrate Independence Day.

The town, reveling in its prosperity, had decided to have a really grand Fourth of July party that year, and plans were made for a parade, baseball game and other festivities.

Some citizens, sensing there might be trouble also made plans to take care of any rowdy hicks that might show up, and 25 men were deputized. A call was also

put in to Coudersport asking for additional manpower. Unfortunately it never arrived.

However over 400 lumbermen did, streaming down from the hills by wagon and on foot.

Many of the deputies immediately vanished, their special badges and canes quickly hidden from the taunts of the brawny woodsmen.

Tom Kennedy, a local outlaw, was also on hand and set the tone for the day. "I'll show this squirt town what a Fourth of July celebration should be like," said he.

'To The Woods'

According to Nuschke's history, the Austin constable at the time was a man named Stephen Bush, who wore square eye-glasses and was in no way equal to the horde of wild men rapidly filling the streets.

Nuschke describes how Bush hurried home to his wife, telling her "We have to leave town at once!" When she asked where, he responded, "To the woods, to the woods," and off they went.

It only made matters worse when the hicks discovered that a local brewer had made up little kegs of beer and was offering one to each hick that marched in the parade. Unfortunately there were only 100 kegs for 400 hicks.

Those hicks who had the kegs and could still march by parade time did so. They must have been quite a sight, marching behind the gaudily uniformed bands, kegs under their arms.

There was a ball game, which apparently was never concluded, since the hicks took exception to nearly every ump's decision, and raced onto the field to express their displeasure.

By 4:00 p.m., the hicks pretty much controlled the town, having pummeled every deputy they could find. Women and children, and probably many male citizens as well, had retreated to their homes and locked the doors.

What with all the firecrackers and such, one house caught fire and burned to the ground because no one was willing to come out and fight it with the woodchicks still in town.

It has been 100 years since that Fourth of July. This year's celebration in Austin is likely to be a good deal quieter.

Then again...

Not So "Safe And Sane" Either

Austin Had Enough Fourth of July Accidents to Have Established a Record for a Full-fledged Celebration

Austin's celebration on July 4, 1888, was about as lively as it could get, according to Marie Nuschke's account. One would have thought that Austinites would thereafter be more inclined to quiet, dignified Independence Day festivities, but apparently not, if this account in the July 6, 1911 edition of the *Austin Autograph* is to be believed. Evidently some of the citizens of Austin found "quiet Fourth" a contradiction in terms.

Notwithstanding the fact that Austin made no preparations for a 4th of July celebration, but on the contrary, rather expected a sort of "safe and sane" occasion, we had the largest list of accidents the town has ever experienced, from the burning of powder.

The first unfortunate victim to sacrifice a part of his body for the "good of the cause," was a young Polack about 20 years of age. He had only been in this country about three months, and he started in on the night of 3rd to make things as hideous as possible.

He selected the cannon cracker to work with, and before his fun had progressed very far, he had a "premature explosion," that relieved him of the second finger of his right hand, and shattered the thumb, besides lacerating and burning the balance of the hand, in a frightful manner. He was conveyed to the hospital where Dr. Page dressed his injuries and his celebration came to an end.

Next on the list came Raymon Lester and Joe Fetzer. They had dug up an old by cannon from some place, and to make as much noise as possible, decided to use the powder from cannon crackers for ammunition. In ramming down the load, the nitroglycerine (the sale of which is forbidden by law) was

punched a little to hard, and the contents of that old cannon came out through every portion of the gun.

Lester's hand was badly burned and lacerated and a large hole torn in his right thigh. The Fetzer lad was not quite so close to the "firing line" and escaped with minor bruises, burns and lacerations. Dr. Page repaired their injuries.

Sometime during the night of the 3rd or early on the 4th, Charles Howe got straddle of some kind of a bomb, which tore or burned a hole in his right leg some smaller than a pine apple, but of sufficient size to have it dressed by a doctor, and Page fixed him up.

Late on the afternoon of July 4th, little Louie Dorio, son of Nick Dorio, aged about six years, attempted to set off some kind of an infernal machine, termed in Fourth of July parlance as a "posy-pot." It bloomed very suddenly, and the fragrance caught Louis in the face, full force. His right eye was terribly burned and it is impossible as yet to say for a certainty whether the sight is destroyed or not. His left eye was also burned, as was his neck and breast.

Dr. Potter is looking after him, and hopes to save the sight of both eyes. Lulu Renicks, the 5-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Renicks, is also under the care of Dr. Potter. She attempted to make a "sizzler" out of a fire cracker, and while blowing it to ignite the powder, caught the charge in the face, badly burned the left eye, and her nose. The Doctor feels certain he will save her eyesight.

There may have been other minor accidents, where medical aid was not summoned, but this is a list sufficient to encourage the absolute prohibition of the dangerous things, and the sooner the whole country comes to realize this, the better off we will be.

Time To Call a Halt

When Drunkenness and Rowdiness Reaches a Stage Where False Fire Alarms are Sounded, it is High Time Our Authorities Take a Hand in the Matter.

This editorial, also published in the July 6, 1911, edition of the *Autograph*, directly below the description of the accidents, lends further credence to the violent nature of Fourth of July celebrations in Austin. Given the nature of Austin's history, one suspects that, despite this plea for "reason," a reading of local papers in subsequent years might reveal a few more such "dastardly deeds."

Probably no incorporated municipality in the state will stretch its authority or power to condone a breach of the peace, or a little "side stepping" on the 4th of July, or any other special occasion, more than Austin. But there is reason in all things, and generally a limit, and when any person or persons get to that stage in their hilarity, or devilishness that they imagine they are pulling off a joke by sending in a false fire alarm in the middle of the night, it is time such people be taught the difference between right and wrong.

No town in the world, of the age of Austin, that has had a more costly fire experience than this same "saw-dust" city, and up till this Thursday morning, at about 1:30 our fire alarm has always been held sacred, and for no other use except the most dangerous of calls.

But on this occasion, to top out a hilarious jammer, some one had the nerve to set on fire a huge dry-goods box in the center of Main Street, and send in a fire alarm.

It may have seemed funny for those responsible for the act, to see the firemen hurrying out, but had a genuine alarm been sounded afterwards, and no one responded, it might not have been so funny and the cost might have piled high.

There is no excuse to offer for such a caper, and it remains for the burgess or some other official to settle this matter in a way that no other person will care to imitate the trick in the very near future.



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Hustling, Enterprising Town Of Austin

Almost 20 years old and full of the vigor one would expect of such an age

Situated on Freeman Run, and nestled in one of the narrowest valleys of old Potter County, is the hustling, enterprising Borough of Austin.

Eighteen years ago this spring no such town marked the map of Pennsylvania, the post office of this particular point being Freeman Run.

In 1886 F. H. Goodyear began his extensive lumber operations at this point, and in less than eighteen months a town of over 2,000 inhabitants had grown up upon the farm of Edward O. Austin. It was too much and too lively a place for "Freeman Run," and consequently a new name was adopted, and very appropriately taken from the oldest settler—E. O. Austin. In 1888 by a petition of the citizens, the town was granted a borough charter, and J. W. Thome was elected the first burgess.

Austin, from its advent upon the map marked the liveliest settlement that has ever been known in Potter County. In the lumber business Austin has served what Bradford has always maintained in the oil business—the headquarters of all field operations. It was here that the Goodyears laid the foundation for their millions, and the bit "Austin mill" is known throughout the whole United States. Upon this industry, and its subordinates, the town of Austin grew and prospered until the year 1901, when the Bayless Pulp and Paper Company located one of the finest and most extensive pulp and paper plants to be found in the East on Freeman Run Creek, near the north line and within the borough limits of Austin. The location of this extensive industry added nearly one thousand population to the town, and while our population is barren of capitalists, our citizens are noted for their enterprise and thrift and the products of our various industries are making millions for their owners.

No town in the state of Pennsylvania has a wider reputation than Austin, gained through various manners—good and bad. During its short career nearly the entire area has been burned over. In 1890 the entire business portion was fire-swept, leaving not a store, hotel or business block in the town, except the office of E. O. Austin, the Cottage Hotel and the Autograph block. In 1897 came the great Turner street fire, sweeping before it more than a hundred residences. In less than one year from the date of each fire, the burned districts were entirely rebuilt in more substantial manner than before the fires.

The population of Austin, is composed almost entirely of the working class, and they are exceptionally thrifty, owning their own homes and generally displaying a feeling of contentment.

The town boasts of one of the finest high schools in the country supporting a faculty of fourteen teachers, with an enrollment of over 600 pupils. Five churches—all supplied with pastors—are well supported and well attended. Five hotels are to be found here, conducted second to none in the country. Business houses of every nature in the mercantile line, all doing a successful business, are found with stocks, the equal of establishments in cities many times the size of Austin, and while her citizens seldom attempt to run matters of the county the town will continue to form a part of, and do her share towards the support of one of the best counties in the State.

(From the Potter County Journal, May 25, 1904 Potter County Centennial edition.)

Costello, Lively And Pleasant Town

This thriving village is situated on the main line of the B. & S. R. R., three miles southeast of Austin, at the confluence of Freeman's Run with the first fork of the Sinnemahoning river.

It is the home town of 70 prosperous and contented people. Amid surroundings of enterprise, culture, educational, social and religious advantages, seldom found in a town of its size.

The several lines of trade and manufacture in operation are conducted by men who believe that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and this principle is applied to all their daily transactions.

The aim of the merchants and business men is to promote the welfare of the town to the end that it may continue to be a desirable place of abode and a profitable location for business. And Costello today has every advantage and prospect for future growth and development. The stores of all sorts will compare favorably with those of other towns of larger size, and the merchants renowned for liberality, enterprise and fair dealing.

The mammoth sole-leather tannery of the Penn Tanning Co. (one of the largest in the world) is located here, and furnishes employment to a large part of the working population. It is the intention of the operators to make this a semi extract tannery, and many extensive changes are being made and many thousands of dollars worth of new machinery is being put in for that purpose. This will reduce the amount of bark consumed about half.

A 250-horse power gas engine has been installed to furnish power to run the special machinery required in the extract process.

The plant is supplied with a water system and fire protection second to none in the country. The equipment includes two high pressure steam pumps, hook and ladder trucks, hose carts and sufficient hose to reach the most distant

part of the town. A machine shop equipped with the latest improved wood and iron working machinery, under the able management of C. E. Haglund greatly facilitates the running of the plant.

The C. H. Smith Co. store is a well equipped general merchandise establishment employing seven clerks in the various departments, and under the able management of Mr. Charles Miller, is doing an extensive business.

The firm of J. H. Rees & Co. dealers in hardware and farm machinery have by far and honest dealing built up a fine business and enjoy a large trade with the surrounding country.

The pharmacy of Rees & Richardson carries one of the most complete stocks of drugs and druggists' sundries to be found in Northern Pennsylvania.

L. A. Harrison, one of the pioneers and solid business men of the town, keeps a full line of groceries, provisions and shoes, and is getting his share of patronage. The other merchants in town seem to be doing a flourishing business in their several lines. Our two hotels, "The Costello House," J. Q. Adams, proprietor, and the "Moran House," kept by Thomas Moran, are comfortable and well conducted stopping places for the accommodation of the traveling public. The increase in business has necessitated the enlargement of the latter house to nearly three times its original size.

Two commodious and tasty churches grace the town—the Catholic and Methodist Episcopal. Both organizations are in a thriving condition and the churches well attended.

Our two graded schools (Cottage and Costello) are the pride of the town. With an enrollment of over 250 scholars and a very efficient corps of five teachers, excellent progress has been made along educational lines.

Altogether Costello has made most satisfactory progress and promises to develop into a thriving place. The location is quite attractive, the town being situated in a beautiful and fertile valley surrounded by towering mountains, some of which are still covered with their original growth of stately hemlocks. The picnic ground just south of the town has long been the favorite place for picnickers from this part of the county. A large amount of labor and money has been expended in beautifying the grounds and erecting buildings.

A. B. Peet
(From the Potter County Journal, May 25, 1904 Potter County Centennial edition.)

WEBSTER HARDWARE CO. L't'd. Austin to the Front With a Flourishing Hardware Business

The beginning of the second century of the country's history finds our store filled to the fullest extent with the greatest variety and best assortment of hardware that we have ever carried.

In the future as in the past we shall exert ourselves to the utmost to please our customers new and old.
Webster Hardware Co. L't'd., Austin, Pa.

(Advertisement, Potter County Journal, May 25, 1904 Potter County Centennial edition.)

People Of Nerve And Energy

Austin is not
down and out

Austin people are again demonstrating that they are a brave and courageous people. Less than three weeks have passed since the town was thought to have been wiped off the face of the earth and the residents who had escaped with their lives were broken with grief over loved ones who were less fortunate and huddled midst the ruins of their former homes, it seemed to the outside world that hope had vanished. But the people are rising superior to the calamity and to-day the place has again taken on an appearance of some activity.

The main street has been cleared and three stores are open and doing business. They are the Nelson general store, the Higgins Brothers grocery and boot and shoe store and the Austin Hardware store.

The work of re-building the pulp mill has begun and a railroad track is being constructed to the mill for the purpose of taking wood to the buildings. It is expected that the Bayless Brothers will salvage all that remains of the debris, much of which is good timber for their use.

The Emporium Mill was not badly damaged by the flood and it will be repaired and improved and work will be continued there.

Dr. Dixon, of the State Health Department with his staff departed Sunday leaving the affair in the hands of local committees. All of the state constabulary have been recalled except ten who will remain there for some time longer.

Dr. E. H. Ashcraft, who has worked with untiring zeal and energy, to bring relief to the stricken town and to if possible prevent any epidemics of sickness reports the health condition to be very good. He says that with the exception of colds that have been brought on by exposures the people are in good health and that he sees no reason why it should not continue so. Dr. Ashcraft says that at present the people are provided with sufficient food and clothing but that later when other matters are interesting the attention of the country at large will come the danger of suffering.

It certainly behooves the people of the state to keep Austin well in mind as the winter approaches.
(From Potter Enterprise, Oct. 19, 1911.)



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Legal Inquiry Begins

The preliminary inquiry into the Austin flood disaster was brought to an abrupt close Friday afternoon when Frederick Hamlin, superintendent of the Bayless Pulp and Paper Mill refused to testify upon the ground that his testimony might tend to incriminate him. Walter K. Swetland, of Coudersport, formerly state representative, his attorney, advised Mr. Hamlin to take this course and supported him in it. The inquest was indefinitely adjourned. District Attorney Harry Nelson announcing that the next hearing will be held in Coudersport at some future date. A week or so will be taken to give opportunity for looking up the legal points involved.

Hamlin was almost the last witness called, and almost the first question brought forth his refusal to answer. He was asked if the Austin Boro Council of which he was president had at any time sent a written protest to the Bayless Company against the existing condition of the dam. He refused to answer. Mr. Swetland stated that inasmuch as it was common report that the inquest was being held for the purpose of bringing criminal prosecutions, that he had advised his client to his course.

"Do you mean that in answering me, he might incriminate himself?" asked District Attorney.

"He might incriminate himself or the testimony might be used against him at any subsequent prosecution, therefore I must insist that he need not answer," replied Mr. Swetland.

No Charge Made

The District Attorney stated that no charge had been made against Hamlin, but this did not alter the situation any, and a question directed to Hamlin as to whether he was a member of the Boro Council in 1910 was blocked by counsel before Hamlin could answer. F. F. Bray, secretary of the Council, later stated on the stand, however, that the Bayless company had never been notified by the Council that the dam was in an unsafe condition, although it was common report that the dam was unsafe.

The inquest was based on the deaths of Mrs. Jacot Hess, 43 years of age, and her son, Reese, six years old whose bodies were among those found in the ruins. Dr. E. H. Ashcraft, county medical inspector, was the first witness summoned. He stated that he had examined the bodies and concluded that the persons had met a violent death that the bodies had been found among the debris and that the jam formed about the bodies was largely due to pulp wood and that the bodies had been bruised considerably by this wood.

How The Dam Gave Way

Harry Davis, a B. & S. engineer who was the man to telephone the warning to the Austin telephone exchange when the dam gave way, was the next witness. Davis said that the first break in the dam was due to the breaking out of a round plug of concrete 8x10 feet in diameter which was forced out four or five feet above the base of the dam towards the left side. The water shot through, and then a large piece above the opening broke away and rolled into the stream. The dam then broke clear through to the top. Davis stated that the point where the dam broke was considered in January 1910 when the dam gave trouble to be the most secure part of the dam.

L. B. Seibert who was driving along the road toward Coudersport a few hundred feet below the dam when it broke gave testimony which confirmed that of Davis. He described the buckling and breaking of the dam in three places.

Assistant Engineer F. W. Jackson of the State Highway department told of a private examination he made of the dam with F. N. Fauver, his assistant. He said the inspection was purely a personal affair, because he and Fauver were interested as engineers.

His testimony showed that on September 19 last, eleven days prior to the breaking of the dam, more than fifty fissures, through which streams of water one inch in thickness gushed, were visible from the bank. He said the concrete walls bulged outward, or down-stream, between two of three feet from the straight line.

The protest from the citizens of Austin, when they learned of the plan for a secret inquest, had its effect. The officials consulted in private and then announced that a misunderstanding existed — that there was no intention of holding the inquest in secret. It was the postmortem on the body over which the inquest was to sit that would be private. Austin people protested against the postponement of the inquest and transferring it to Coudersport, but their protest was without avail.

A charge of involuntary manslaughter will be preferred against the persons who are directly responsible for criminal negligence in the construction or maintenance of the dam of the Bayless Paper and Pulp Company.

This was made clear by Deputy Attorney-General William N. Hargest after the first session of the Coroner's inquest. Mr. Hargest was ordered here to advise and assist Public Prosecutor H. W. Nelson in conducting the inquest. He said:

"It does not matter whether this dam had or had not State control. The responsibility of the owner is precisely the same.

"If there was any negligence, either in the construction or the maintenance of the dam, that negligence was directly responsible for these deaths.

"The persons guilty of the negligence would be guilty of involuntary manslaughter.

"If the evidence shows criminal

negligence on the part of the dam owners then they are liable for civil damages as well as criminal prosecution. (From Potter Enterprise, Oct. 12, 1911)

Young Survivor Recalls Events Of Saturday

Agnes Hernquist, age 12, describes how she watched flood come

"My mother was down in the valley shopping and my dad was at the barbershop," said young Agnes Hernquist, 12, one of the survivors, along with her parents, of the terrible deluge that demolished the homes, businesses and the lives of so many.

The plucky young lady, interviewed yesterday, just four days after her hometown was practically washed away, said she came very close to being caught in Saturday's flood because she had decided to take a ride with a passing farmer going down to the grist mill. Luckily for her, she changed her mind, realizing she hadn't got permission from her mother or father for the trip. Instead, she got off at Mrs. Williams house, where the good lady, a close neighbor, set her to polishing silver.

When the whistle blew, Agnes ran back home, thinking it was a fire. Her mother arrived soon after.

'Better Go Up Higher'

"We were out in the yard and somebody hollered the dam had gone. So I said, 'Well, we'd better go up higher,' and my mother said 'Oh, the water isn't going to come up this high.

"So she stayed and I ran up to where the hospital was, and I watched the flood come down. From the dam to the paper mill, the whole valley was full of what they called the pulp wood, the logs they used to make the paper.

"The flood made such a terrible roar, and it looked just like a huge cloud, like you see in the sky, and it was just as white as could be. It was coming down the valley and was pushing the pulp wood down ahead of it."

At the hospital, Agnes was witness to the dreadful agony of the Dr. Mansey, whose wife and baby were at home, on Turner Street, an area completely destroyed by the watery rampage.

"He stood there, pulling the hair out of his head," recalled little Agnes sadly.

Fence In Way

It has since been established that the doctor's wife had been trying to help an elderly woman, Mrs. Willeit, escape. They were stopped from going up the hill by a fence, common in a town where almost everyone keeps cows. The two women and the baby perished there, unable to get over the fence, three of the estimated 85 residents who lost their lives in this dreadful debacle.

"That farmer I saw earlier in the day — he was drowned and the horses were drowned. If I had gone with him, I no doubt would have been drowned too.

"I wouldn't have given the horses up," said the tender-hearted young girl. "They said they thought that he would've lived if he'd just forgot about the horses. But he was like me, he didn't want them to drown."

Agnes' little tale is just one of hundreds. Every survivor has a story, a story of escape, and a story of sorrow about those who did not. Those stories will be told over and over, and likely will be handed down from generation to generation. One can imagine that some day in the distant future the remains of the dam will be treated as an historical monument like the ruins of ancient Egyptian cities are today.

Perhaps the ancestors of Saturday's victims will take their children to the site, and the children will hear the family stories and try to imagine how it really was.

But imagination will never be able to encompass the reality which these survivors confront as they go about the business of putting their town back together, putting their lives back together and getting back to normal, if that be possible.

(This article is a re-creation based on the eyewitness account of Agnes Hernquist Murphy printed in the 1986 publication "Flood Of Memories." Agnes was 12 at the time of the flood and witnessed the event just as described above. All direct quotes are Agnes' own words as reported in "Flood Of Memories.")

Had Prior Warning

Everywhere the cry is heard, "Why did they people not heed the warning they had a year ago?"

At that time the dam was reinforced and many believed it to be as safe as it was possible to make it but like those who live at the foot of the volcanoes, the people of Austin had become accustomed to this terrible menace that constantly threatened them.

(From an article in the Oct. 5, 1911 issue of the Potter Enterprise.)

Footnote

When Agnes Murphy gave her eyewitness account of the Austin flood in the 1986 publication, *Flood Of Memories*, she remembered a John Nelson being at the neighbor's house where she was visiting when the alarm sounded.

Just before the alarm went off, recalls Murphy, "John said, 'Hey Agnes, what would you do if the whistle blew and the dam broke?' I said, 'I don't know.' Took me by surprise when he asked me. And then it was only about five minutes later when the whistle really did blow."

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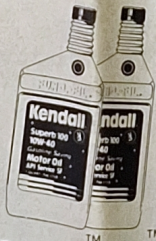
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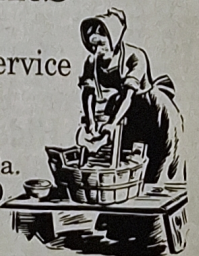
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To Guard Against Any Possible Shortage of Water in the Future Another Immense Reservoir will be Constructed. May Lead up to Enlargement of this Plant.

This article reporting on the proposed construction of an "immense storage reservoir" and extolling the virtues of the Bayless Pulp & Paper Mill appeared in the April 8, 1909, issue of the Autograph, a little over two years before that same reservoir broke and flooded the town.

It is up to certain newspapers in this section to inform their readers that "Austin has another new lease of life."

As we predicted at that time, the long, continued drought of 1908 was a blessing to Austin in disguise.

Recent developments substantiate that prediction. Last week the Bayless Pulp and Paper Co. made final arrangements for the construction of another immense storage reservoir, which insures them of ample water to operate their plant without a minute's shut-down for lack of water, unless we should experience a drought of even greater duration than that of last season.

The dam for this immense reservoir will be located on the company's land, known as the Rinehult farm, below the present reservoir. It will stretch across the valley 650 feet, with a average height of about 50 feet, and will hold between three and four hundred million gallons of water.

This in addition to the old reservoir will insure the plant sufficient water for four months run, if there is not a drop of water coming into the

reservoir. The construction of this new dam and reservoir will be under the supervision of Mr. T. Chalkley Hutton of Wilmington, Del., one of the best engineers in the United States. His assistant, who will be continually on the work, Mr. W. G. Roummel of the same place, is now here, and preliminary work has already begun. It will require an immense amount of machinery and material for the work, and it is now estimated that it will require six or seven months, with a large crew of men working day and night, to complete the job.

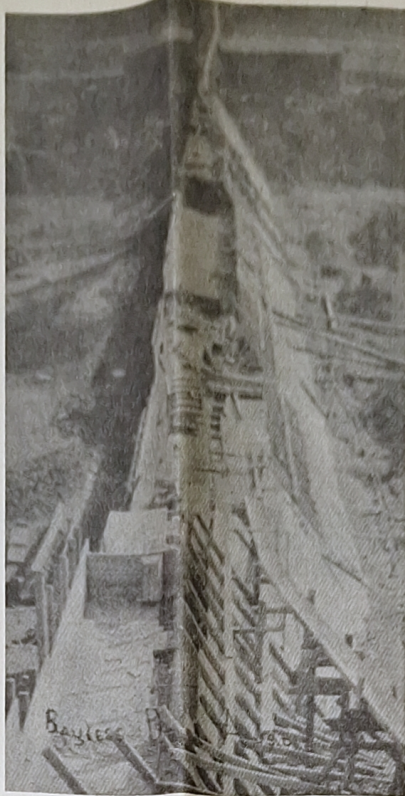
While the Bayless Company has given out very little concerning their contemplated improvements, we have it from very reliable authority, that the construction of this new reservoir, and additional supply of water, means an enlargement of their plant.

The construction of this new reservoir means a lot to the borough of Austin, in more ways than one. First of all it means the steady operation of one of the best pulp and paper mills in the country for years to come until the raw material is exhausted, at least, which means untold

benefit to Austin in particular, and Potter County in general, because the raw material going into this product had always been allowed to lay in the woods and waste, until the Bayless Company found a process from which waste hemlock could be used in the manufacture of paper.

Another advantage to Austin borough, with this increased supply of water in storage, is the benefit we can derive, if ever we should have a fire of great magnitude. With our connection, for fire purposes, to the immense pumps of the Bayless Co's system, we could fight fire for an indefinite time with all the streams we could man, and never run short of water.

The Bayless Pulp & Paper Co. is composed of as fair, just and enterprising a set of men as ever did business in any town in the world, and the sooner the people of this country gets this idea instilled in their minds the better it will be for all. The people of Austin have long since recognized this fact and we all unite in saying Amen to the contemplated improvements.



The Bayless dam in early stages of construction.

Statement Of Eyewitness Mr. Clarence E. Tyler

Made to Phila. Manager H.J.B. at Austin, May 10, 1912

The following is the statement made by eyewitness Clarence Edward Tyler during the inquiry following the dam break.

"I am employed as foreman by the Bayless Pulp & Paper Co. On September 30, 1911, I was at the timber dam which is located from 100 to 120 rods above the broken concrete dam.

It was about 2 P.M. I was on the east end of the dam about 40 feet from the road and 20 feet from east end of the dam. I was employed shoveling dirt and was facing up the rim. I heard an explosion of dynamite or an explosion like it and locating the noise back of me, I turned quickly around, looking down over the pond toward the lower dam. The pond was smooth and unruffled, and the wall of the lower or concrete dam was level and unbroken; then I saw a spray shoot out from the west side of the dam and as high as the trees on the west bank that can be seen from the timber dam, about 30 feet high.

It also flew out towards the east. I could not see west of that for the trees which at the time were fully leaved. Immediately I saw a wave, looked like a little "white cap". It was as near as I could judge 18 inches high, rolling rapidly and coming from the direction of the west side of the dam or from a point near the west side of the dam and appeared like a half circle and was rolling towards the east side of the pond, but only got a shortways, when it disappeared and the water in the pond flowed rapidly towards the west side, where the first break is from the west shore.

The water fell off rapidly and exposed the upstream side of the wall of the dam; the water line being much lower on the west side than the east side, perhaps ten feet, making a slope showing the water at that time was flowing out of a break on the west side.

I kept working towards the road sideways, to get a better elevation. I was about 20 feet from the road when I saw a "back lash" that is the water in the pond, flowed rapidly towards the dam, which up to that time, as far as I could see, presented a straight unbroken line. The water struck it as if with a mighty blow, engulfed it, rose up and passed over it, rose to such a height, that Miss Brooke's house seen by me was out of sight, that stood only



View of the dam that Tyler described in his eyewitness statement after the flood.

a moment and then dropped back.

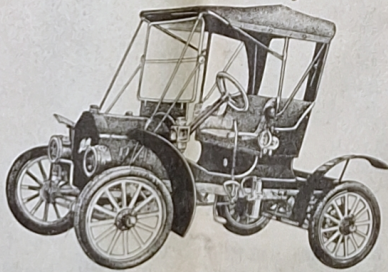
Near the east end of the dam, there was a gate hole cut through the dam, the water having washed the dirt from the lower side, which was the weakest part of the dam, when the "back lash" disappeared that part of the dam was gone; then the other pieces slowly moved, making a dull grinding sound, which could be heard above the rush of the water and above 8 feet of the dam was in view and the water was flowing out rapidly.

I was astounded. Possibly a minute expired from the time I first heard the explosion up to that point. I hollered to the men who were working on the east side, "The dam is broke."

They apparently did not hear me or understand. I hollered again and all started down the wall. I had a bicycle and passed the others. There was working on the east side of the bank, Frank and Harry Kitch, Alvin House, Ray Striker, Dave Reese and Oscar Clifton. When I reached the dam wall, the concrete blocks stood as they are now, the water was pouring through the openings and the pockets between the cement dam and the stone dam was all of two-thirds empty and the water was passing over the stone dam about ten feet thick.

Since the affair, John Bunday and B. J. Hill, both have said they believed the dam was dynamited.

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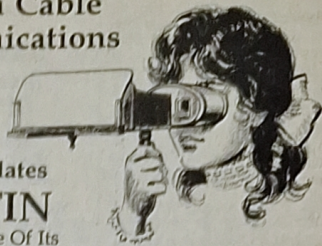
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Bodies Hidden Under Mud

The curious crowds that walk to and fro watching the rescuers—if persons who search for the dead with no hope of finding the living can be called rescuers—trample upon the faces of the unnumbered corpses buried in the soil. There is no doubt that when that slime is cleared away it will be found to contain much of the dreadful story of Austin's destruction.

Where once were shaded streets not a tree is to be seen. The four-story brick hotel which told of Austin's commercial pride has been razed as clean as if a wrecking crew had taken it away to build a new one on its site. Other substantial business blocks have been utterly destroyed.

Horror of Disaster
Grows, and Loss of Life
May Reach 700 Persons

The three-story opera house, a frame building, was shattered into kindling wood. The Catholic church, also a frame building, was not in the center of the path of the flood, but it was lifted and hurled into a broken mass against

the adjoining mountainside. Its steeple cross, which yesterday was a finger pointing the thought of the faithful to a loving God, is today directed at right angles to the foot of the mountain.

For the distance of a mile between the dam and Main street or what was once Main Street, shattered houses lie along the foot of the hills, dreadful testimonials of the power that lay even in the very fringe of the flood. Below Main Street, the bed of the run makes a sharp turn to the left. This caused the debris to pile up three stories high in a huge jam.

In this dreadful pile Austin today was looking for its dead. And yet, of all who witnessed the horrors of the scene, the people of Austin seem to have the least realization of the force of the blow that has struck them. Persons who, if they had lost a dear one through natural causes would ring their very souls in grief, look into the faces of inquiring strangers, tell of a mother, a father or other loved ones gone to death in this calamity, and smile.

(From the October 2, 1911 North American, a Philadelphia newspaper.)

'That Dam Ain't Going To Last'

Austin Storekeeper Feared Dam, Tried To Warn Residents

According to young Jack Cooney of Costello, there was at least one man in Austin who had no faith in the dam. Storekeeper William Nelson, said Cooney, would tell people, "That dam ain't going to last."

According to another survivor, Nelson, who kept riding horses, took a horse ride every night to inspect the dam.

When the dam broke last Saturday, Nelson tried to rescue his horses. But he lived on Turner street, one of the worst hit streets in town. He did not survive, and neither did his wife.

However, his teenage daughter Madge did. This reporter has heard two accounts of Madge's survival, but has been unable to speak with the young miss herself to determine which is true.

In one account, Madge supposedly saw a boxcar headed for her home and dived into bed. Though her parents' home was demolished, Madge survived, floating half a mile on her mattress before being deposited on the roof of the B&S station, which stood in the middle of a mill pond behind Main Street.

The other account credits Madge with telling her mother to grab two mattresses and get between them. Madge did the same, and was found safe in the mill pond, between her two mattresses. Her mother however drowned.

(This article is a re-creation based on the eyewitness accounts of Agnes Murphy and Jack Cooney reported in articles written for the 1986 publication "Flood Of Memories.")

There were many such stories told in the days and weeks after the flood, some more true than others. True or not, they will continue to be handed down, orally and in print, and in the end it won't matter to anyone but the historians whether they were fact or fiction or something in between. They will survive because they are true in spirit. That is what legends are, the spiritual truth of an event, distilled into a story.)

Queer Antics Of Flood

Picture Missing From Frame, Glass Unbroken

In the more deliberate search of the ruins today it was found that some queer things were done by the flood. In the house of Father P. C. O'Brien of St. Augustine's church, a mantel clock stopped at exactly 2:29 p.m. The priest left his house for a time this morning and when he came back he found that one of the souvenir hunters had walked in and removed the clock. Father O'Brien did not mind the loss but it showed that even his house was not exempt from the inquisitive visitors.

The constabulary placed a guard over his house to save it from further marauding. Out in the middle of the swept valley a picture frame 30 inches square was come upon today. The picture was missing and the frame itself was jammed into the mud, but the glass was unbroken.

The diggers in the debris came up on the bodies of two horses which had been picked up and were caught in the tangle of jack straws as high as the third story of the main street buildings.

They were still in the torn shreds of the harness with which they had been hitched to a two-seated carriage that was found right behind them. The spot where they lay was directly in front of the Goodyear hotel. Apparently they were standing at the door when the water came. It has been found that what was the cellar of the Commercial hotel has been filled in with soil until it is on a level with the ground.

The water evidently washed in at least 10 feet of loose earth.

"There is no way of telling," said one of the constabulary officers today, "what we shall find when the ground is dug up. It must be remembered that right here was the wall of buildings that withstood the wave long enough to pile up these hillocks of broken houses. Bodies have been taken from here right along. I don't believe we can make a positive estimate on the death list until we have cleared this cellar away."

The house of Patrick Mitchell was standing a quarter of a mile below the dam. It was lifted up, carried 100 yards and set down again with its walls torn apart. In the third floor you could see today a coat hanging upon a peg on a third floor wall that was exposed.

(From Potter Enterprise, Oct. 5, 1911.)

Sad Sight

At the morgue Tuesday was to be seen a child's shoe resting upon a bundle wrapped in a blanket.

(From the Oct. 5, 1911 issue of the Potter Enterprise.)

—The Misses, Ella and Hattie Deiches of Austin took a very prominent part in an entertainment at Pike Mills, last week, for the benefit of the proposed new M. E. church. The play, entitled "Cinderella," under the management of Mrs. Clinton, was highly appreciated, and casts much credit on all who took part. It netted the society about thirty dollars, which speaks well for the liberal views of the citizens of Pike Mills.

(From the Nov. 25, 1887 Austin Autograph.)

—Dr. W.W. Rinn wishes to announce to his patrons in this vicinity that he will be at Austin Tuesday, Nov. 6th, prepared to do anything in the dental line. Parties wishing plate work done before the holidays will please call on this date.

(From Oct. 14, 1887, issue Autograph.)

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JULY, 1988

July 1-2: Red Suspender Weekend with raffles, firemen's water battles, games, food, Friday hours 3 p.m. til ? and Saturday 11 a.m. til ?. Parade Saturday at 4:00 p.m. Held at Centertown Park, Galeton. Info: Richard Smith 814-435-6579.

July 2: Galeton Fireworks at Dusk (about 9:30 p.m.) in Centertown Park. One of the biggest and best fireworks displays in the northeast!

July 2-3: Bark Peeler's Convention at the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum. Old-time crafts, woodsmen's demonstrations, exhibitions. Contact PALMA, Box K, Galeton, Pa. 16922; phone 814-435-2652.



AUGUST, 1988

Aug. 1-6: Potter County Fair at Millport, located on Route 44 North. Free admission. Info: phone 814-544-9958.

Aug. 5-7: 37th annual Woodsmen's Carnival held at Cherry Springs State Park. Info: Bob Varley, 37 First St., Galeton Pa. 16922; phone 814-435-8164.



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THOUSANDS DEAD AT AUSTIN

Continued from Page 6

crushed by the heavy timbers, which were carried down the valley by the onrush of the water.

"There was confusion everywhere. The fire started about a half hour after the dam burst and the two destructive forces carried everything before them. I did not see any persons actually killed or drowned, but one man told me that he heard the agonizing cries of men, women and children as they were swept down the valley by the flood. In the residential section of the city not many people lost their lives. They had time to reach the hills, where they were safe. Their property was totally destroyed, but the loss of life was not as great as in the business section, where the people did not realize until it was too late that the dam had burst.

"Those who escaped joined in the work of relief. As far as I have been able to learn there was no looting and nothing was stolen from the dead bodies. The governor of the state, the state board of health, the board of charities and the police were notified as soon as possible and relief trains were rushing from Olean, Saint Mary's, Galeton and other points. Food and supplies were given to the refugees in the hills.

"It is impossible to estimate the number of dead and injured. I believe that it will not be less than 200 nor more than 1,000. Those who lost their lives were swept down the river, so it will be several hours before their bodies can be recovered and identified. There were not a great many bodies recovered in the village itself.

Dam smashed in five places

"The dam, as far as I have been able to ascertain, burst at about 2 o'clock. I was notified about an hour later and went to the scene in my automobile. The dam was empty when I saw it. There were five openings in the walls, each about 30 feet wide. The fissures extended from the top to the bottom. The dam was between 42 and 47 feet in depth. The water rushed out of the openings down the valley, sweeping everything before it. The Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and three mission churches were totally destroyed. They were swept from their foundations and reduced to kindling wood as they were carried down the stream. The four hotels of the village, the post office, the bank and all the stores on Main and Turner streets, the shops, railroad station, the hemlock mills and the Goodyear and Emporium mills were entirely destroyed.

"The work of devastation was complete when I arrived and those who were fortunate enough to escape uninjured turned their attention to the villagers in distress. I hope that I may never witness a repetition of such scenes again. The disaster has resulted in the loss of hundreds. What the property loss is can only be imagined."

TAKING OUT BODIES.

Coudersport, Pa., Sept. 30.—District Attorney Nelson returned from Coudersport at 10:30 o'clock this evening from Austin and said that 139 bodies had been taken from the wreckage. He said it was impossible to tell how many remained. His estimate of the dead is 300.

He said the business center of the town was jammed as high as the second story windows with pulpwood and pieces of houses that had come down the valley in the flood and had been left in the streets when the waters subsided.

Some of the debris had been snatched up and deposited in so short a space of time that it was not even wet. When Mr. Nelson left Austin, the wreckage was burning furiously. The town water system has been destroyed and men were trying to put the fire out with water carried in buckets from Freeman's run.

The father and mother of State Senator Frank E. Baldwin were drowned, but the senator escaped. He owns a lot of real estate near Austin and is a member of the legislative committee that has been investigating municipal affairs in Philadelphia. Another who got away from the flood was William Metcalf, superintendent for the Goodyear Lumber Company. He ran up a hill with the water at his heels.

RED CROSS AIDS VICTIMS

Body will appeal to the Nation should there be need of great fund

Washington, D.C., Sept. 30.—Red Cross assistance is being rushed to the survivors of the appalling disaster at Austin, Pa. Ernest P. Bicknell, national director of the society, left Washington at 10:45 o'clock tonight for the stricken city, expecting to arrive early tomorrow. He has the emergency fund of \$15,000 of the Red Cross at his command and immediately upon arrival will call for all the nurses, physicians, food, clothing and shelter that will be necessary to meet the immediate needs of the people.

If the available funds of the Red Cross and the contributions which invariably flow in the wake of a national disaster are exhausted, President Taft may be asked to call on the people for assistance.

ESCAPED TO TELL TALE.

It is one of Horror related by C. F. Collins.

By fleeing to the hills after hearing the blowing of the whistles at the Bayless Pulp and Paper Company's plant, which warned the people of the bursting of the dam, C. F. Collins, who was on the Main street of Austin when the walls broke, saved his life and told the story of his own escape and that of

others last night. He was reached by The Express over the telephone late last night at Coudersport.

"I was on Main street at 2 o'clock in the afternoon," said he, "when I heard the whistles at the mill. The people in the stores, the factory hands and those in their homes rushed into the streets and made for the hills. I think about ten minutes elapsed between the blowing of the whistles and the destruction of the first building.

"The water, a solid mass 30 feet high, poured out of the dam toward the village. The 15,000 cords of pulpwood between the town and the dam acted as a side wall and prevented it from being diverted. The stream gained in velocity as it struck the Main street and swept every structure from its foundation.

Many of the residents were caught by the waters before they could reach the hills and were carried down the valley to sure death. I saw dozens who made frantic efforts to free themselves from the timbers and wreckage. Dead bodies floated on the surface and went down stream so fast that they could not be rescued.

"The water passed within 50 yards of me as I stood on the hills. After the flood had subsided I assisted in caring for the injured and in the removal of the dead, many of whom were so frightfully mutilated that they were beyond recognition.

"The dead were taken to side of the hill to await the arrival of the coroner and the state police. Most of the people who lost their lives were caught like rats in a trap and drowned before they could reach a place of safety."

PRIEST ON THE SCENE

Father Sheehan there—Talks to F. A. Lehr.

F. A. Lehr, secretary and treasurer of the Goodyear Lumber company, which owns a plant at Austin, but has not operated it since last spring, talked with Father Sheehan of Coudersport over the telephone last night. He declared that the entire town, with the exception of a few houses on the hills, had been entirely wiped out.

"The fire is being checked somewhat," said the priest, "by the fire department of Galeton, Pa., which answered the call for relief. It had such a start, though, when the firemen and apparatus arrived that but little of the village which escaped the flood could be saved."

Father Sheehan went to Austin as soon as he learned of the disaster and administered spiritually to many who were dying. After doing what he could for the relief of the sufferers he returned to Coudersport for food and supplies. He told Mr. Lehr that the governor and the state board of charities were organizing a force for the relief of the refugees. Food and clothing are being rushed with all possible speed to the scenes of the disaster, the priest said.

Father Sheehan was unable to ascertain definitely how many people had been killed or drowned. He said that he believed the number would be between 200 and 600.

Mr. Lehr stated that he had been unable to communicate with any of the officials of the company at Austin or Keating Summit. He could not estimate the extent of the damage to the property of the firm. He may go to Austin for that purpose today.

FATHER O'BRIEN'S STORY.

Father O'Brien, rector of the parish at Austin, says that the water came down in a terrible rush upon the valley, sweeping everything in its course. The whistles blew out an ominous warning. Five minutes later the torrent of death and destruction had engulfed the town. "Austin is practically swept off the map," said Father O'Brien at Port Allegany last night. "About 600 houses were wiped away. The buildings were shattered as if by a hatchet. The destruction is complete. The deluge carried away everything in its path."

The parish was entirely destroyed. Father O'Brien succeeded in reaching the hills in the nick of time. He returned to minister to the dying and to assist in the work of rescue.

A Port Allegany priest, who hurried to Austin after hearing of the catastrophe, spoke to many eyewitnesses and some of the injured. He declares that few people will be taken from the debris alive. The injured will not number more than 30, he asserts.

"Practically the entire population in the valley when the dam broke perished," he declares. "Most of the people were either drowned or killed outright by the falling debris. Few bodies will be recovered. Many of them will be consumed by the fire that has broken out in the debris."

The rescuers constructed makeshift bridges and waded through many feet of water, he asserts. One woman was chopped out from under a mass of lumber. Her body was horribly mutilated and she will not live.

An entire family was found imprisoned by debris. The father, mother, and two children were suffering from fractured skulls and broken spines. They died shortly after being taken out. The survivors who were on the hills when the dam broke are in a daze and wander about like lost children. Stones and lumber are used for the makeshift bridges.

DEEP, NARROW VALLEY.

Austin is a village of 2,400 people in Potter county, Pennsylvania, on the Buffalo and Susquehanna Railroad, twenty miles southeast of Port Allegany. For many years it was the center of the lumber industry of that section and the immense plant of the

Goodyear interest is located there. For a dozen years lumber cutting has decreased, until within the last year the Goodyear plant has practically closed down. The Bayless Pulp and Paper Mill has for several years practically been the life of the village.

Austin is in the narrow valley of the Sinnemahoning creek, formed by the joining of two smaller creeks at the eastern rim of the village. The Bayless Pulp and Paper Mill Company is located on the southern fork, about one half mile above the village. The Goodyear mill is but a very short distance above the junction of the two small creeks. The valley is very narrow, less than 1,500 feet, and the village straggles up both sides almost to the summits of the steep hills.

The business section of the village is at the lowest point in the valley. Main street being crossed by Sinnemahoning creek at its eastern end. The residential streets run parallel to the creek. Practically all the houses and stores in the village were of wood, because of the proximity of the lumber supply. There were a few brick structures and some cement buildings.

THE END OF AUSTIN

Austin, according to A. C. Goodyear, whose family owned the Buffalo and Susquehanna Railroad which developed the lumber interest of Potter county, which, in turn, gave existence to the devastated village, will never again appear on the map. The failure of the Goodyear Lumber mill in Austin and its subsequent shutdown point out the unfortunate lot of the little village and the fact that its industries were so on the decline that yesterday's flood will sound its knell.

Back in 1893 the beginning of the prosperity of the Goodyear interest in the mountains and valleys of Northern Pennsylvania attracted extensive capital. The Goodyear railroad was making over \$5,000 per mile per year. Although the business was to a large extent coal shipments from Goodyear mines around Du Bois, lumber industries near Austin, as well as large tanneries thereabout, were the backbone of the money-making.

A big Goodyear lumber mill at Austin developed so fast that by 1904 it was turning out upward of 10,000 feet of hemlock per hour. Two hundred men were employed in the two shifts that made up the 22-hour working day. In the depth of the narrow valley, right on the Sinnemahoning's branch, down which much of the lumber was floated, the range set of wooden buildings stood directly in the path of the deluge.

But the mills were idle yesterday afternoon. They had been shut down many months ago. The wealth of hemlock on the neighboring hills had been used up. Efforts had been made to get logs from McKean county to the saw, but it did not pay. It is held probable that the demolition of the nearby hills made it so that the cloudburst of two weeks ago rushed into the pond of the Bayless paper mill with such force that the torrent undermined the dam.

The Austin mill of the Goodyear company was the second largest of five mills in the immediate region. In addition to that, the Emporium Lumber Company of Buffalo had at the annihilated village a crate and wood-tiling factory which employed 75 men. Moreover, Austin once boasted of a kindling wood mill that turned out 22,000,000 bundles a year. This, too, stood idle yesterday when the flood hit it. The buildings were situated directly in the torrent's path.

50-TON PAPER MILL

The Bayless company, whose dam burst, was the only industry in Austin not owned by Buffalo interests. The majority of stock in the concern is held by Binghamton (N. Y.) capitalists. The big factory, modern in every particular, turned out 50 tons of paper a day, employed nearly 300 men and paid out in wages \$11,000 a month.

In keeping with the modern character of the mill, electric, as well as steam power was used to grind up the 100 cords of wood wood a day. The plant cost not less than \$600,000.

Improvements in the Bayless plant were made continually. Of these, the great dam, built only four years ago, was the greatest. Made of concrete, it met the standards of engineering in every way. Yet, the sudden torrents that it had to withstand, so weakened it that two years ago, a rumor that it had burst caused Austin to flee terror-stricken. But it was reinforced even beyond the recognized requirements of safety, and was considered impregnable.

According to Mr. Goodyear, at least two thirds of Austin lay in the direct course of the flood and must have been swept down the gully. Hardly a house was any distance up either slope. This was also true of Costello, four miles down the valley, where the torrent, still resistless in its strength, played havoc with the little valley village of 1,200 souls.

It was at Costello where the biggest of the eight Pennsylvania tanneries of the United States Leather company was located. Near a little church on a slope above the village, the mammoth three-story L-shaped factory gave employment to 300 men to whom was paid over \$10,000 a month. The tannery uses 30,000 cords of hemlock bark a year and daily works up 500 dry hides imported from South American and makes them into 1,200 sides of sole leather.

Largest Tannery in World.

This tannery, known as the Camden States Leather company as the Camden and held to be the largest in the world, was so far up the slope as to escape the flood. But the hamlet of workmen's homes and the village proper were down along the bank of the little river

which swelled into the deadly torrent that had already demolished the sister village up the valley.

DISPATCHES TO MR. SYKES

William L. Sykes, president of the Emporium Lumber company, which operates a mill at Austin, received two messages over the telephone last night from Miss Smith, the company's bookkeeper at that village, in which the loss of life was placed at between 200 and 500. She informed him that the section of the town on high ground near the hospital was in flames, and that the resident portion would probably be wiped out by fire.

"I believe that the loss of life will be over 500," said Mr. Sykes last night. "The fact that the flames have eaten their way to the houses on the side of the hill leads me to the belief that a large number of the people of the village perished. I was in Austin three weeks ago and passed the dam in my automobile. I noticed that the section of the wall which had weakened was reinforced. The walls, in my opinion, did not seem strong enough to retain such a large volume of water, and the thought struck me that the people living near the dam were in extreme danger. The reservoir extended over ten acres and showed weakness soon after its construction. It was built straight across the valley and was not arched as it should have been, according to my judgment."

Mr. Sykes said that the value of the wood in and about the mill of the Emporium Lumber company is above \$150,000. The lumber at the Goodyear's mill is probably worth much more. It is believed that the lumber at both mills was carried down the valley, in which were about 15,000 cords of dry pulpwood piled up below the dam.

Clouds Seem To Be Moving On

Activity and Hope Spring Up in Austin

There is good reason to believe that Austin will get back on the map as large and busy as ever.

In a talk over the telephone with Senator Baldwin he told the *Enterprise* that the Bayless Pulp and Paper Company would rebuild; that the Emporium Lumber Company would at once repair their mill and proceed with their business as before. He also thought other industries would be established and the town get back on its feet very quickly. He is very busy and is working night and day to bring about encouragement and success for the people of stricken Austin.

Prothonotary F. J. Wandall came home Monday for the first time since the calamity and his ideas are very similar. He is confident the Bayless Company will rebuild and go ahead, that the Emporium Lumber Company will continue their work, that the Austin bank will soon be ready for business and in short that Austin will again be one of the liveliest towns in the state. Mr. Wandall is one of the partners in the Austin Hardware Company. They have saved a good share of their stock and will soon be open for trade again. This is also true of the Nelson grocery which has been opened by the eldest son, a promising young business man, and several other business places.

The clouds seem to be moving by and there is still hope for Austin and her people.—Good.

Yesterday two unidentified bodies were recovered making a total of 66. There are still ten bodies of the known dead to be recovered, while the unknown dead will probably never be known.

Mrs. D. H. Lamb, of Galeton has taken three of the little flood victims and will care for them during the winter.

Members of the Austin borough council deny that citizens of the town ever urged them to pass resolutions calling upon the paper company to replace the dam damaged in 1910 with a new dam.

(From Potter Enterprise, Oct. 12, 1911.)

What About Costello?

Some Coudersport people feel that in the generous impulse that has prompted the public to heap benefits upon stricken Austin, Costello has been overlooked. While the loss of life there was not great, the destruction was very serious. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Richards have arranged to go to Costello Sunday to see what the conditions there may be.

(From Potter Enterprise, Oct. 12, 1911.)

FINIS

Indians departed one by one; Settlers left when their work was done. Bustling industries came and died, Leaving their marks on the countryside.

Thousands have walked across the pages Of the Valley's history through the ages. Thus, have the generations passed Like sand in an old-fashioned hourglass.

Those who remember, or have heard tell Of the town's wild days, know very well That out of calamity, chaos and tears Came friendships strengthened through the years.

Good friends show interest in every way In the Valley's growth from day to day; Wistfully hoping they will see Three prosperous towns as they used to be.

The future is hidden from our eyes; But unforeseen miracles could arise To change the Valley so it may claim Prosperity, progress and fame again.

by Marie Kathern Nuschke October 20, 1936

(From Marie Kathern Nuschke's book Little Marie of Freeman Run.)

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